



Judge frees blind driver after miracle

ROME, (AP) — An Italian judge has dismissed charges against a regional blind man with a different licence after he claimed to have been miraculously cured at the Roman Catholic shrine at Lourdes in southern France. The 29-year-old man, who was blind since birth, was freed by a court after he said he had regained his sight during a visit to Lourdes, the Italian newspaper reported on Tuesday. The man, who was employed as a telephone operator, said he had made a special trip to Lourdes on December 14, the feast day of St. Lucia, the patron saint of the blind.

Spy hole for 'client safety,' says owner

BERGSCHE GLADBACH (AP) — A spy hole allowing a German shop owner to secretly watch clients using his bathroom was only "a security measure" to make sure they didn't turn up with a gun, the owner explained. The owner, after being told by police that he was spying on his customers, said he had installed the spy hole to protect his business. He said he had no intention of spying on his customers and that he was only concerned about his safety.

Hitler watercolour sells for \$7,300

A watercolour painting of Adolf Hitler, signed and dated 1934, has sold for \$7,300 at an auction in London. The painting, which depicts Hitler in a military uniform, was one of several items from a collection of Nazi memorabilia that were sold at the auction. The collection included various photographs, letters, and other personal items of Hitler.

London arch could be used to house homeless

A large archway in London, which has been abandoned for years, could be used to house homeless people, according to a local council. The archway, which is located in a central part of the city, is a large, stone structure that has been left empty since it was built. The council is considering the idea of converting the archway into a shelter for homeless people.

War-time memoir book sells for £1,000

A book of war-time memoirs, written by a British soldier, has sold for £1,000 at an auction. The book, which is titled "The War Years", is a collection of letters and diary entries that the author wrote during his time in the military. The book is considered a valuable historical document and is in excellent condition.

Jordan joins U.N. convention on chemical weapons

THE HAGUE (AFP) — Jordan on Thursday became the 102nd nation to ratify the international Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the Hague-based Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) announced. The Kingdom is the first country neighbouring Israel to ratify the convention which was signed but not ratified by Israel. The OPCW said in a communique that Jordan will formally adhere to the convention once the ratification process is completed by Nov. 28. The convention, which entered into force in April 1977, bans development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons. Among Middle Eastern countries that have yet to ratify the convention are Iraq, Libya, Syria, Egypt and Lebanon. Others include North Korea and Sudan. Britain, China, France and the United States have signed and ratified the text.

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Pope condemns violence in Algeria, air embargo on Libya

VATICAN CITY (AFP) — Pope John Paul II, speaking Friday to North African bishops, condemned violence in Algeria and called for an end to the air embargo on Libya. His comments were to visiting Roman Catholic bishops of the North African regional Episcopal conference, including bishops from Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia. The pontiff, referring to the bloody five-year conflict in Algeria between Islamists and the military-backed government, said the violence was "unacceptable to the human conscience." He called for respect of human life, reconciliation "and the healing of the many wounds in the hearts of so many people." Pope urged dialogue to restore peace and said the Vatican would not spare any effort to back up those peace efforts.

Two Israeli soldiers questioned about Arafat assassination plot

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Two Israeli soldiers have been interrogated about a plot to assassinate Palestinian President Yasser Arafat but released for lack of evidence, the Israeli weekly Kol Ha'ir reported Friday. The two soldiers were apprehended by Palestinian police several months ago while driving in the West Bank town of Ramallah in separate cars, the weekly said. They were armed with automatic weapons but dressed in civilian clothes. The two soldiers, whose names were not divulged, were turned over to the Israeli army by Palestinian Preventive Security and questioned for several hours by agents of Israel's domestic intelligence agency Shin Bet, the weekly said. The soldiers reportedly said they were simply passing through Ramallah and had no intention of assassinating the Palestinian president, who was in the West Bank town at the time. An Israeli security official expressed concern to Kol Ha'ir that two armed Israeli soldiers had been able to circulate in the self-rule town of the Palestinian leader's vicinity. An army spokesman refused to confirm or deny the report.

Israel warplanes raid Hizbollah positions

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli warplanes staged a raid on Friday on a position held by Hizbollah in southern Lebanon, a military spokesman said. The position, located to the west of the town of Jezzine, was destroyed and the Israeli planes returned safely to base, the spokesman said. The raid followed a roadside bombing which killed two members of the Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army (SLA) in Jezzine, the spokesman said. Voice of the South, SLA Radio, said two SLA militiamen were killed Friday when Hizbollah guerrillas opened fire on their position in the Toumet Niha area with automatic weapons and anti-tank rockets.

Egypt arrests 16 Islamists in the north

CAIRO (AFP) — Egyptian security forces have arrested this week 16 members of the armed Jamaa Islamiyah movement who were trying to recreate a network of cells in northern Egypt, police said. The 16 were detained in the regions of Alexandria and Beheira, respectively 220 kilometres and 160 kilometres north of Cairo, the source said. A judicial source said they had been remanded in custody for 15 days by the state security court. The 16 told investigators that they wanted to revive Jamaa's network and were planning to commit attacks on shops selling alcohol, the source said.

Iran says 11 members of opposition group killed

TEHRAN (AFP) — Eleven members of Mujahadeen Khalq (People's Mujahadeen), the main Iranian opposition group, were slain this week in Iran, the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) said Friday. "Four squad members were killed Thursday while trying to enter Iran through the Mehran area in Ilam province" in southwestern Iran at the border with Iraq, IRNA said. "The squad's equipment and arms were seized by Iranian soldiers."

Prince Hassan calls for pooling efforts to achieve development

Poverty, unemployment do not differentiate between birthplace of people — Crown Prince

By Samir Ghawi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — HRH Crown Prince Hassan has emphasised the importance of pooling efforts to formulate a national approach in order to identify priorities that aim at achieving comprehensive development which would reflect on all groups of society.



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali (left) and Minister of Planning Rima Khalaf attend the meeting of the general committee for designing the 1998-2003 Economic and Social Development Plan, Thursday (Photo by Yousef 'Allan)

Opening the meeting, Thursday, of the general committee for designing the 1998-2003 Economic and Social Development Plan, held at the University of Jordan, Prince Hassan stressed that the pooling of efforts and working hand-in-hand are the basis for achieving aspired development.

The partnership between the social groups and the government is the basis for future progress," he said after taking off his jacket, removing his necktie and rolling up his sleeves.

The Crown Prince waged fighting poverty and unemployment, which do not, he said, differentiate between the birthplace of people. He also urged moving from mere talk about fighting corruption to studying the mechanism and the means to eliminate this problem.

He proposed setting up an integrated system of transparency and accountability backed by a qualified and fair judicial authority. Prince Hassan referred to injustice inflicted on the Palestinians and called for liberalising the Palestinian economy from Israeli dominance as the trade between the two sides is 240-times the volume of trade between Jordan and the Palestinian territories.

U.N. Security Council weighs options on Iraq; Russia opposes use of force

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — The U.N. Security Council was due to meet Friday to consider options in reaction to Iraqi defiance as Moscow expressed its categorical opposition to the use of force.

The top U.N. arms inspector, Richard Butler of Australia, was to brief the council on Friday in the wake of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's decision to expel U.S. weapons inspectors from Iraq by next Wednesday.

That decision was followed on Thursday by Iraq's refusal of entry to three U.S. inspectors, despite a warning from the Security Council of "serious consequences" over Iraq's refusal to cooperate with the U.S. arms monitors working for the U.N.

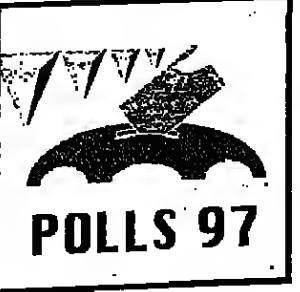
As of Friday morning, Mr. Butler had taken "no decision" on whether to pull out the eight U.S. inspectors remaining in Baghdad in line with President Saddam's order, according to his spokesman Ewen Buchanan.

Western diplomats said that a British proposal to send an envoy to Baghdad had the support of the majority of the 15 council members. However, the envoy's identity and the person's mandate would have to be worked out. And a senior Western diplomat recalled that even a visit to Baghdad by then U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar in 1991 failed to persuade President Saddam to pull his troops out of Kuwait.

Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990, triggering international sanctions which are to remain in place until Mr. Butler's U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) certifies that all Iraqi weaponry of mass destruction has been dismantled. The Iraqi forces were pushed back during the 1991 Gulf war, and the U.N. inspectors have been monitoring Iraqi disarmament ever since.

As of Friday morning, the United States position was unknown following high-level meetings in Washington. U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Bill Richardson was due back in New York from Washington later in the day.

But Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov, speaking in Cairo, said: "We are against any use of force against Iraq." "I speak about this because now some voices have appeared, in particular in the United Kingdom, favouring the use of force against Iraq. We strongly object."



By Rana Hussein
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — With three days remaining for the 1997 parliamentary elections, the competition in the north of the country seems to be dominated by tribalism and the absence of political slogans, according to analysts and observers.

Up north, candidates dismiss political slogans, concentrate on livelihood

In Irbid, Ramtha, Bani Kinanah, Mafrqa, Kourah and North Ghour districts, elections will be dominated by candidates who come from large clans, or who were nominated by their tribes, or who served in the last Parliament. Analysts maintain that the voters' turnout at polling stations on Nov. 4 will be low because of people's disappointment with the performance of the previous two parliaments, and the opposition's boycott of the elections.

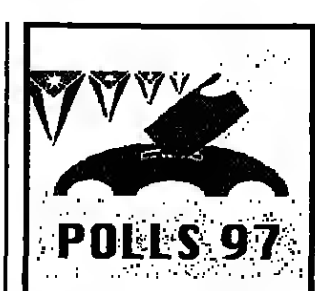
In Irbid, where 220,913 have registered, and 159,080 people have collected their voting cards, 55 candidates are competing for the eight Muslim seats, and four are competing for the one Christian seat. Observers say that Raji Haddad has the best chance to win the Christian seat, while former deputies Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh, Abdul Razzaq Tubeishat and Saleh Sbawatah are favoured to win the Muslim seats.

Other runners-up are: Kamel Omari, Sami Khasawneh, Majed Ababneh, Mohammed Bani Hani, Mohammed Baraine and Younes Jamrah. "I am not going to vote because I am frustrated with the previous two parliaments and the deputies' performance, who promise but do not act," a 52-year-old Irbid resident said.

But for Ayman Alawneh, a currency exchange shopowner, elections are important in order to produce a parliament that can provide services to the people and the country. "I have already chosen a candidate who I am sure is a good person to represent us in Parliament," Mr. Alawneh told the Jordan Times.

Mahmoud Sharyrah, a 59-year-old pensioner, said despite the disappointing performance of the two previous parliaments, "still, we are supporting a candidate whom we know will deliver the right message and raise our concerns and demands to the authorities."

Mr. Sharyrah also criticised the opposition's decision to boycott the elections, stating: "I am against their decision to boycott, because the opposition should be inside Parliament and not outside, and their absence will only weaken the Lower House."



By Francesca Ciriaci
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Four candidates were detained but later released and 11 were referred to the prosecutor general for election fraud last week, Mazen Armouti, official spokesperson for the elections, said Friday.

11 candidates face prosecution for alleged fraud

The authorities initiated legal action against these candidates, all running in the Amman 1st and 5th districts, following people's complaints that their voting cards had been collected from the poll stations with forged power of attorney documents, Dr. Armouti said. He declined to name the candidates because "if their names are released before legal procedures are conclusive, there would be grounds for libel lawsuits."

The four candidates who were detained for interrogation at the police station, all running in the 1st District, were released after they returned the voting cards they had illegally obtained. As for the other 11 candidates, including several prominent former officials, they will now be prosecuted according to the law, Dr. Armouti told the Jordan Times.

U.S. pressing Israel to hand over 10 per cent of W. Bank

TEL AVIV (AP) — The United States is pressing Israel to give the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) another 10 per cent of the West Bank and commit to a starting date for a troop pullback during U.S.-hosted peace talks next week, Israeli newspapers said Friday.

The U.S. appears to be siding with the Palestinians who say the scope of Israeli redeployment in the West Bank must be the key issue in the talks that begin Monday near Washington. "This is the main issue, the substance of these negotiations," Ahmad Qureia, the speaker of the Palestinian parliament, told the Associated Press. "If they [the negotiators] will not succeed, it will be a catastrophe."

Israel wants the PNA to shelve demands for a troop pullback, and in exchange offers to slow Jewish settlement construction in the West Bank and Gaza Strip while the two sides move to negotiations on a permanent peace agreement. In such a temporary slowdown, Israel would continue with construction projects already begun, but put on hold those still in the planning stages.



By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The 17 candidates competing for the two seats in the Southern Bedouin District have only two items on their agendas: creating more jobs for their fellow tribesmen and providing them with more services.

Members of the largest southern bedouin clans will go to Parliament

The election programmes of the candidates are mainly focusing on economic issues and how to serve the bedouins in the south," Mr. Momani said. He told the Jordan Times Friday that more than 92 per cent of the 33,839 registered voters in this constituency have collected their voting cards.

Mr. Momani, the provincial governor of Sboak who oversees the elections in the southern bedouin constituency. The programmes of other candidates were more or less the same, he said in a telephone interview. "The candidates' promises here focus also on improving the base and support in reaching Parliament."

base and support in reaching Parliament

"I respect my clan's opinion and decision, but my aim is to serve my community and country," Ms. Tel told the Jordan Times, adding: "I sensed strong support and an increase in awareness, mainly from women, during my field trips in my district."

Ms. Obaidat, on the other hand, stated that "even though we are living in a tribal society, Islam gave women equal rights to participate in the political life."

"My tribe is behind me, (Continued on page 2)

Hamas wing threatens Israel with major attack

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Hamas' military wing, the Izzeddine Al Qassam Brigade, threatened Friday to carry out a major attack if Israel failed to meet its demand to stop abuses against Palestinian civilians.

"If our demands are not met, there will be a major operation. Our military capability is more significant than the enemy thinks," the Izzeddine Al Qassam Brigade said in a statement sent to Agence France Presse.

"We reject any ceasefire unless our just demands are met," the statement said.

The brigade has claimed the majority of suicide bombings carried out in Israel over the past few years, in particular the two attacks which killed 21 Israelis in Jerusalem this summer.

In its statement, Izzeddine Al Qassam again said it was ready to halt attacks against civilians and limit its operations to military targets, provided Israel stopped abuses against

Palestinian civilians.

"The Qassam Brigades are ready to limit their military actions by restricting their attacks to Zionist military targets, if the enemy agrees to stop assaulting our civilians, to stop destroying their homes and to stop confiscating their land," the statement said.

But the group added: "There can be no negotiation except on the battlefield."

The spiritual leader of Hamas, Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, freed by Israel at the beginning of October after eight years of detention, said after his return to Gaza that suicide attacks against Israelis could stop if the Israelis stopped destroying Palestinian homes and confiscating Palestinian lands.

But Israel immediately rejected the terms set out by Sheikh Yassin, saying it would not negotiate with an organisation it termed "terrorist."

In another development, some 2,000 supporters of the Islamic Jihad group burned Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in effigy and vowed to continue armed attacks on Israel in a demonstration here Friday.

Islamic Jihad called the rally in a Gaza City stadium to mark the second anniversary of the assassination of the group's leader



Masked activists from the Islamic Jihad Movement burn American flags during a rally Friday on the second anniversary of the assassination of Fathi Shikaki, Islamic Jihad founder, killed in Malta two years ago. Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, the Hamas founder who attended the rally, said that Islamic Jihad and Hamas will continue to fight Israel (Reuters photo)

ister Benjamin Netanyahu in effigy and vowed to continue armed attacks on Israel in a demonstration here Friday.

Islamic Jihad called the rally in a Gaza City stadium to mark the second anniversary of the assassination of the group's leader

Fathi Shikaki by presumed Israeli agents in Malta.

During the demonstration, 10 young activists, their faces masked by Kufeya scarves and wearing shirts with Shikaki's picture, lynched a dummy labelled "Netanyahu" and set it ablaze.

A tape was played to the crowd with a speech by Ramadan Shalah, the group's new leader based in Damascus, proclaiming, "We will continue our Jihad [holy war] until Palestine is liberated."

The spiritual leader of the larger Islamist movement,

Hamas, Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, also spoke to the crowd.

"Hamas and Jihad and all the Palestinian factions are one body against the one enemy and its spies and conspiracies. We will not allow the Palestinian ranks to be split," he said.

Mossad revives its plan to assassinate Saddam — report

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The Israeli secret service Mossad has revived a five-year-old plan to assassinate Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, the Israeli press reported Friday.

Israeli newspapers, citing the London-based newsletter Foreign Report, said Mossad was seeking to reestablish its credentials following the attempt to poison Hamas leader Khaled Misha'al in Amman last month.

Foreign Report, citing a "well placed security source in Tel Aviv," said Israeli commandos have been told to carry out a feasibility study along the lines of the 1992 planned hit on President Hussein.

That November 1992 operation was aborted after six Israeli soldiers died in a training accident on the eve of the mission, according to Foreign Report, which said Israel had intended to avenge President Hussein's Scud missile attacks on Tel Aviv during the Gulf war.

Foreign Report quoted the security source as saying that following the assassination bid on Mr. Misha'al, "Mossad are burning with ambition to show that their ability to carry out such an operation still exists."

However, the source warned, that if the assassination of the Iraqi president failed, "there could almost be a war because Israel would have to engage half its air force to bring the commandos home."

Two Mossad spies were arrested by the Public Security Department following the attack on the Hamas politburo chief in one of Amman's streets and a furious King Hussein demanded the release of Hamas founder Sheikh Ahmad Yassin and other prisoners for their return.

General Dan Shomron, a former chief-of-staff of the Israeli armed forces, warned Friday that Iraq remained a "potential danger" to Israel even if it did not currently have the capability of attacking the Jewish state.

U.S. official meets Yemeni president

SANAA (AFP) — U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Martin Indyk met Yemeni leaders here Friday on the first stop of a tour aimed at drumming up support for a regional economic conference to be held in Qatar next month.

Mr. Indyk and Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh discussed "ways to develop American-Yemeni cooperation in order to benefit the two friendly countries," the official SABA news agency said.

They also discussed the "situation in the region and developments in the peace process," it added.

Mr. Indyk welcomed Yemen's economic reforms and told Mr. Saleh that Washington wanted to boost bilateral cooperation with Sanaa. Mr. Indyk, the former U.S. ambassador to Israel, arrived in Sanaa on Friday and is to head on to Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Most Arab countries have announced plans to boycott the Nov. 16-18 economic conference in Doha because of the presence of Israel and the deadlock in the peace process. Yemen has said it plans to take part.

Members of the largest southern bedouin clans will go to Parliament

(Continued from page 1)

infrastructure for bedouin settlements such as communication, health and education services."

Mr. Njadat and Salem Zawaydeh, also a former army brigadier and member of 12th Parliament, are described by observers as having good chances to win.

Another favourite, also is former minister Abdullah Haroun Jazi, a physician by profession, who depends largely on his clan, the Jazi, for winning the elections.

This constituency, which groups bedouins living in Karak, Aqaba, Ma'an and Tafleh, is considered the stronghold of the influential Hweitat tribe, with its 24 clans.

Other candidates include: Ali Awad No'emat, a retired army colonel, Khalaf Suleiman Rwaifeh, Ali Mohammad No'emat, a driver, Smour Mohammad Hweitat, former army officer, Yusri Jazi, businessman, Ahmad Eid Abu Khalil, farmer, Fahim Jassim Maraya, teacher, Nazzal Mifteh Rkeibat, farmer, Salim Ayed Jazi, farmer, Bakheet Mohammad Man'ayeen, farmer, Rweidi Farah Sa'adeen, former army brigadier, Sayel Mohammad Rashaydeh, retired army general, Awad Salim Abu Tayeh, teacher, and Misha'al Hamad Abu Tayeh.

Up north, candidates dismiss political slogans, concentrate on livelihood

(Continued from page 1)

and I will work to serve my society's concerns which I have lived day-by-day, not like some candidates who remember their communities only at the time of elections," Ms. Obeidat said.

In Ramtha, 25 kilometres east of Irbid, the people of this border town want their future deputies in Parliament to help them cope with the authorities' decision to move the border crossing with Syria 20 kilometres east.

Eighteen candidates are competing for the three Muslim seats in the district where 69,793 have registered to vote and, 59,457 have collected their voting cards until Friday.

Observers predict a low turnout on election day mainly because of the people's feeling that the decision of moving the main business of the border post away from their town will not be reversed. The border point with Syria is Ramtha's most important source of income.

In addition, observers say that the disunity among some tribes in some areas over nominating any one candidate will cause vote splits.

But still, observers maintain that the competition for

the three seats is strongest among four candidates: Fawaz Zou'bi, Osama Malkawi, Mohammed Basbabsheb and Ghazi Obeidat.

"I am not going to vote because the future Parliament will be a continuation of the previous one, which served no one but the deputies' interests," a 32-year-old man said.

"I wish nobody would head for the polling stations on Nov. 4 because they will waste their time," the man, who wished not to be identified, added.

Elsewhere in the northern districts people are concerned about other issues closer to home. These issues which candidates are calling for in their banners and campaign programmes include poverty, unemployment, providing services, but no politics.

In Kourah and the Northern Ghor District, where 72,128 have registered to vote, of whom 56,729 have collected their voting cards, 27 candidates are competing for the two Muslim seats.

Voters in these two densely populated regions are optimistic that their deputies will ensure development and rehabilitation projects to fight poverty and unemployment.

Unlike the other districts in the north, Mafrqa promised a high turnout on election day.

That, observers say, is because of the pure tribal nature of the population and the absence of other competitors, including the opposition and independent candidates.

Analysts predict that despite the tough competition for the three Muslim seats in Mafrqa, former deputy Abdul Karim Dughmi's win is guaranteed.

Of the remaining 16 candidates who will compete for the other two seats where 45,552 have registered to vote and 38,291 have collected their cards, the competition is limited between Nawaf Khawaldeh, Turki Akhou Rbeida, Mohammad Talab Abu Oleim and Abdullah Basbous.

Reem Abu Darboush, an attorney, says she will vote because it is her constitutional right and expressed her optimism that the elected parliament will work to improve and change some of the current legislations.

"We should vote because it is in the interest of all, and by participating in the elections, I know that I am helping to build my country," Ms. Abu Darboush told the Jordan Times.

U.N. Security Council weighs options on Iraq; Russia opposes use of force

(Continued from page 1)

efforts" to persuade President Saddam to reverse his decision to bar the U.S. inspectors from Iraq, one diplomat said.

Among the options on the table, according to diplomats here, are the possible imposition of additional sanctions against Iraq approved by the council last week, despite abstentions by China, France and Russia.

In Resolution 1134 adopted last Thursday, the Security Council called for an international travel ban against specific Iraqi officials

blamed for obstructing the U.N. inspectors.

The resolution provided for council members to start drawing up, in cooperation with UNSCOM, a list of officials who could be targeted by the travel ban. However, diplomats noted that work on such a list had barely begun.

No new incidents involving UNSCOM's eight remaining U.S. disarmament inspectors in Iraq were reported on Friday.

Spokesman Buchanan said that Friday was "a peaceful day in the office" for the U.N. weapons inspectors in Baghdad, who

"continued with their paperwork" at UNSCOM's monitoring centre staffed by about 100 international officers.

Mr. Butler on Wednesday halted Iraqi field operations by the U.N. inspectors, but decided that office work and staff rotations would continue as usual.

Al Thawra, the newspaper of Iraq's ruling Baath Party, reiterated Friday that the Iraqi authorities "were ready to cooperate with the U.N. Special Commission for disarmament but not with members of American nationality."

11 candidates face prosecution for alleged fraud

(Continued from page 1)

and eight opposition parties, some observers believe that the turnout will be lower.

Addressing a press conference Thursday, however, Dr. Amouri said he expected this year's turnout to be "relatively high."

"Turnout is not a function of government action, but we will do our best to ensure popular participation on Nov. 4, by harnessing all communication capabilities, and trying to address all potential voters through the mass media," he

told reporters.

"It is a duty of the government to enhance the democratic process by persuading the largest number of voters to cast their ballots," Dr. Amouri added, describing wide participation as "a basic strategic objective of Jordan."

In reply to a question on whether foreign observers will be watching the elections, a measure proposed by the Islamists before their July boycott decision, Dr. Amouri said: "We have expressed our readiness to welcome and receive all kinds of delegations and indi-

viduals who are interested in inspecting our records and visiting registration and polling stations without any restriction.

"However, it is not our duty to invite such delegations or civil societies to come to Jordan, because it is a standard procedure to invite them only in cases of civil wars, turbulence, or when elections are held for the first time," Dr. Amouri said.

Several organisations have expressed an interest in watching the upcoming elections, including the Amman branch of the Arab Organisation for Human Rights, he said.

JORDAN TELEVISION Tel. 77311-19 PROGRAMME TWO	
14:10	Twinkle
14:30	Muppet Show
15:00	Pumpkin Patch
15:15	World of Geo
16:00	The Valley Between
16:30	Beakman's World
17:00	French programmes
19:00	Le Journal
19:30	News headlines
19:35	Neighbours
20:00	The Newly Weds
20:30	Prison
21:10	Time Trax
22:00	News in English
22:30	Feature film
23:59	Ellen

PRAYER TIMES	
04:29	Fajr
05:47	(Sunrise) Doha
11:19	Dhuhr
14:23	'Asr
16:51	Maghreb
18:09	'Isha

CHURCHES	
St. Mary of Nazareth Church	Sweifeh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church	Tel. 637485
St. Joseph Church	Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation	Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church	Tel. 661656

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Terra Sancta Church	Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation	Tel. 623541
Anglican Church	Tel. 652826
Armenian Catholic Church	Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church	Tel. 775261
St. Ephraim Church	Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church	Tel. 5516245
Evangelical Lutheran Church	Tel. 824328
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation	Tel. 845457
The Latter-Day Saints	Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth	Tel. 675691
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman	Tel. 811295
English-speaking	
Latin Catholics Parish	Tel. 614190

WEATHER	
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology	
Scattered showers are expected, skies clear to partly cloudy, and winds southeasterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be	
northerly moderate and seas calm.	
Min/Max temp.	
Amman	14/24
Aqaba	19/29
Deserts	11/27
Jordan Valley	20/30
Yesterday's high temperatures:	
Amman 24 Aqaba 28 Humidity readings: Amman 58 per cent, Aqaba 53 per cent.	

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS	
NIGHT DUTY	
AMMAN:	
Dr. Abbas Al Hakim	885446
Dr. Aradat Al Ashhab	602507
Dr. Ayman Al Muhtaseb	875748
Dr. Jamal Jharab	847351
Firas pharmacy	661912
Ferdows pharmacy	778336
Al Asena pharmacy	637055
Nairookh pharmacy	623672
Al Salam pharmacy	636730
Yacoub pharmacy	644945
Shmeisani pharmacy	637660
Najib pharmacy	847632
IRBID:	
Dr. Mazen Abu Bakir	276852
Al Quds pharmacy	(—)
ZARQA:	

Dr. Ya'acub Al Khatib	991772
Khalifeh pharmacy	985417
EMERGENCIES	
Food Control Centre	637111
Civil Defence Department	661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue	630341
Rescue Police 192	621111
637777	
Fire Brigade	617101
Blood Bank	775121
Highway Police	843402
Traffic Police	896390
Public Security Department	630321
Hotel Complaints	605800
Price Complaints	661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints	897467
Amman Municipality Complaints	787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance)	121
Overseas Calls	010230
Central Amman Telephone	623101
Repairs	623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs	661101
Jordan Television	773111
Radio Jordan	774111
Water Authority	680100
Jordan Electricity Authority	

Electric Power Company	815615
RJ Flight Information	08-53200
Queen Alia Int'l. Airport	08-53200
HOSPITALS	
AMMAN:	
Hussein Medical Centre	813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn	644281/6
Akileh Maternity, J. Amn	642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity	642362
Mallhas, J. Amman	636140
Palestine, Shmeisani	607071
Shmeisani Hospital	669131
University Hospital	645845
Al-Minasser Hospital	667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali	666126/57
Al-Ahli, Abdali	664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen	77101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh	775111/26
Army, Marka	891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital	602240/50
Amal Hospital	674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery	865199
ZARQA:	
Zarqa Govt. Hospital	

FOR THE TRAVELLER QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT	
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200 where it should always be verified. Information on other flights is obtained on telephone (08) 52700 or (08) 523250.	
ARRIVALS	
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights	07:15 Aqaba (RJ)
08:25 Damascus (RJ)	
09:30 New Delhi (RJ)	
09:55 Karachi, Dubai (RJ)	
10:05 Beirut (RJ)	
10:15 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)	
11:25 Colombo, Abu Dhabi (RJ)	
14:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)	
16:20 Cairo (RJ)	
17:40 London, Berlin (RJ)	
19:30 Frankfurt (RJ)	
20:55 Frankfurt (add) (RJ)	
23:55 Paris (RJ)	
00:10 Paris (add) (RJ)	
05:15 Bangkok (RJ)	
DEPARTURES	
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights	05:00 Aqaba (add) (RJ)
07:00 Beirut (ME)	
07:35 Damascus, London (BA)	
10:30 Al 'Arish (PF)	
14:15 Abu Dhabi, Bahrain (GF)	
14:45 Riyadh (SV)	
15:50 Vienna (OS)	
19:00 Dubai (EK)	
23:35 Cairo (MS)	
23:55 Damascus, Paris (AF)	
00:35 Amsterdam (KL)	
03:00 Athens (AZ)	
04:20 Rome (OA)	
06:15 Beirut (MR)	
06:40 Beirut, London (BA)	

OTHER FLIGHTS	
09:30 Al 'Arish (PF)	
13:15 Riyadh (SV)	
15:05 Vienna (OS)	
18:00 Dubai, Damascus (EK)	
21:10 Paris, Damascus (AF)	
21:15 London (BA)	
22:30 Athens (OA)	
22:35 Cairo (MS)	
23:30 London, Beirut (BA)	
23:45 Amsterdam (KL)	
23:45 Beirut (ME)	
03:25 Rome (AZ)	
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Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights	07:15 Aqaba (RJ)
08:25 Damascus (RJ)	
09:30 New Delhi (RJ)	
09:55 Karachi, Dubai (RJ)	
10:05 Beirut (RJ)	
10:15 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)	
11:25 Colombo, Abu Dhabi (RJ)	
14:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)	
16:20 Cairo (RJ)	
17:40 London, Berlin (RJ)	
19:30 Frankfurt (RJ)	
20:55 Frankfurt (add) (RJ)	
23:55 Paris (RJ)	
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03:00 Athens (AZ)	
04:20 Rome (OA)	
06:15 Beirut (MR)	
06:40 Beirut, London (BA)	

Queen inaugurates second annual children's conference

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Second Annual Conference for Jordanian Children, organised by the Children's Rights Committee of the Jordanian Women's Union, was opened Thursday by Queen Noor at the Royal Cultural Centre, according to a press release.

The three-day conference, which brings together around 500 children aged 12-17, will review the results of the 1996 conference, as well as endorse the creation of a national committee of representatives of children, the committee will also focus on related topics including the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, Jordanian legislation with respect to children's rights, and the participation of children in the country's development.

During the last year's conference, participants urged officials on problems that children are facing, such as abuse, violence, school dropouts, child labour, homelessness, drug abuse. Their recommendations, which include a new law to protect children's rights, were forwarded to the National Task Force (NTFC) to study the draft of a Child Act, which is planned to be submitted to the new Parliament.

The NTFC, which is chaired by Queen Noor, coordinates with existing institutions and specialists working in the field of child welfare through the establishment of a National Council for Child Welfare.

Queen Noor, NTFC, in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Development, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and specialists in the field of child welfare, is working on the advancement of local legislation on children's rights and protection.



The participants in the Second Annual Conference for Jordanian Children sing a song at the opening session of the three-day event. All the participants are aged 12-17 (Petra photo)

The Queen noted that this conference represents "a beginning of a process of education for our young people in the principles and operations of democracy that complements the evolution of the country's political liberalisation in accordance with the Constitution and political realities of the region," the statement read.

This process, according to the Queen, will hopefully produce a new generation of issue-oriented young activists and future political leaders concerned with priorities of importance to the community at large. The Queen has promoted the active involvement of children in the decision-making process. Having been a young student activist herself, the Queen has continuously emphasised her belief that each individual has a moral responsibility to participate as much as possible in developing public policy, according to the statement.

Mohammad Tarm, the founder of the children's parliament, gave a speech on behalf of the participating children, saying that he is witnessing the "realisation of the dream of children to express themselves publicly and convince society that we have a voice that should be heard," the announcement continued.

He said the first steps towards fulfilling that dream were taken in February 1994, when a large group of children met with legislative and executive government officials under the umbrella of the Jordanian Women's Union (JWU) to discuss the protection of children's rights, thereby forming the nucleus of the new children's parliament, the statement read.

In her remarks, Hikmat Halasah, the head of the JWU Children's Rights Committee, said the preparatory conference committee held "eleven preparatory conferences throughout the Kingdom to discuss children's issues in each governorate and for children to elect their representatives to the annual conference." She added that "the committee would have wanted to have had every Jordanian child participate and to have held conferences in all locations, but our financial resources were constrained," the statement read.

UNICEF's Ayman Abu Laman emphasised the importance of the implementation of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Jordan ratified in 1991. He said the Convention covers a comprehensive spectrum of issues pertaining to children's welfare, according to the press release.

On the sidelines of the conference, a book and drawing exhibition were held and were opened by the Queen.

Queen Noor was received by In'am Mufit, a social policy advisor to the Queen, JWU President Amneh Zou'bi, members of the JWU Executive Committee, and NTFC Coordinator Hayat Yaghi, the announcement concluded.

Crown Prince meets with Jerusalem patriarch, calls for Palestinian rights

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan has reiterated Jordan's demand that the Palestinian people regain their homeland and their inalienable rights in Palestine.

During a ceremony at the Royal Court in which he presented Al Kawkab Medal of the First Order to the head of the Greek Orthodox Church in Jerusalem, Patriarch Diodoros, on behalf of His Majesty King Hussein, Prince Hassan said "we yearn for the day when we can see Jerusalem as an Arab capital."

"If the city of Jerusalem politically represents the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people, then this holy city also represents the hope of all the believers in God to serve as the city of affection and peace," he said.

Prince Hassan emphasised that the links between Christians and Muslims are far stronger than presented by circumstances of the present day.

Prince Hassan conveyed King Hussein's greetings



HRH Crown Prince Hassan awards Al Kawkab Medal of the First Order to Patriarch Diodoros of the Greek Orthodox Church (Petra photo)

and his appreciation of and deep respect for the Christians and Muslims and community to the patriarch and his delegation.

The patriarch expressed appreciation and gratitude to the King and the Crown

Prince, noting that the Jerusalem-based patriarchate takes pride in its relationship with the Hashemite Kingdom.

He also expressed its allegiance to and respect for the Royal family.

The patriarch hailed the strong ties between Christians and Muslims living in the Kingdom, saying that the Hashemites have been instrumental in strengthening this relationship over the years.

Health professionals plan to resume strike

Kurdi reneged on agreement — JMA

By Odeh Odeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Health professionals employed by the Kingdom's 22 public hospitals and 650 health centres are scheduled to begin a three-day strike today in protest against what they say is the health minister's failure to implement an agreement reached last Sunday to end the work stoppages observed last month.

Basem Dajani, spokesperson for the pharmacists, doctors, and dentists employed by the Ministry of Health, Friday said the decision to strike for three days, effective between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m., was taken because Minister of Health Ashraf Kurdi

offered the professionals only 36 per cent of the JD793,000 in fees so far collected from patients for medical treatment at government hospitals, and not the 60 per cent as stipulated in last Sunday's agreement.

After a 50-minute meeting with the presidents of the dentists' and pharmacists' associations, Dr. Dajani, who is president of the Jordan Medical Association, said the minister bears the responsibility for the work stoppage because he reneged on the agreement.

The three associations sent a cable to His Majesty King Hussein explaining the situation and seeking his intervention to ensure the implementation of the

accord, Dr. Dajani said.

The associations and their members remain ready for a dialogue with the government and are keen on protecting national interests, but they are determined to carry out the strike until their demands have been met, he stated.

The health professionals, who had carried out work stoppages in October, restated that they will only deal with emergency cases and deliveries during the strike.

The minister, who Thursday gave instructions that 36 per cent of the fund be given to the health professionals, has shown his disregard for the agreement, according to Dr. Dajani.

He demanded that the accord be respected in the

letter and spirit in which it was signed.

Dr. Kurdi for his part told the Jordan Times that he places the responsibility for the work stoppage on the three associations and added that the strike will not be legal and there will be no dialogue if the professionals go ahead with the strike.

The decision to disburse only 36 per cent of the collected fees was because the ministry was in need of part of the fund in order to cover a portion of operational costs and the equipment used in hospitals.

He said he had already informed the three associations of his decision when the Sunday agreement was concluded.

Court hears witness in retrial of ten allegedly involved in 3-year crime spree

By Rana Hussein
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Criminal Court Wednesday heard a witness in the retrial of ten people, of which five face the death penalty for allegedly murdering five people and committing a series of other crimes between 1992 and 1994.

The defendants, including two women, received prison sentences by the Criminal Court in May 1995 ranging from 10 years to the death penalty for committing a total of 230 crimes, including murder, armed robbery, theft, kidnapping, and fraud.

Sergeant Kamal M., one of 12 witnesses who have been recalled by the court during the last five months, confirmed that he wrote some of the police reports concerning the alleged thefts the defendants committed.

They are being retried after the Court of Cassation, which has been reviewing the case for ten months, returned the case to the Criminal Court in April, stating that the court relied only on the defendant's confessions rather than material evidence.

The two defendants, part of a group of 12, were nicknamed "Udwan Mills" because they were apprehended in a police raid in the Udwan Village in Sukhoh, north of Azraq.

Two of the 12 were found innocent by the criminal court in May 1995.

For the past three years, the court has heard more than 160 witnesses in one of the longest cases to be tried in the Kingdom.

Also during the court session, Defence Attorney Jalal Ahlasi presented a statement contesting the detention of the defendants sentenced on theft charges, "since the Court of Cassation returned the case to the Criminal Court for retrial."

The court tribunal, presided over

by Justice Mohammad Ajarmeh and including Judges Mifleh Mubeidin and Issa Hamdan, postponed the case to Nov. 13 to hear more witnesses.

Also Wednesday, the criminal court postponed the case of three people, including a prominent Jordanian singer, charged with rape and statutory rape of a minor in April of this year, for the completion of investigations of perjury charges pressed against the victim.

The court set Nov. 26 for the resumption of the trial.

Two of the three men, identified as T.N. and U.J., the singer, are charged with statutory rape, while the third defendant, J.A., is accused of rape.

In July, the minor changed her testimony on T.N., and said he had no sexual relations with her, prompting the court to order her immediate arrest on perjury charges.

Human rights group 'concerned' about election preparations

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordan Human Rights Organisation (JHRO) has expressed concern over what it calls a number of violations connected with the 1997 general elections, and demanded that the polls be supervised by the judicial authority.

Suleiman Sweiss, the organisation's president, said JHRO had hoped that the government would delay elections for six months, during which he said, sufficient preparations could be made for fair and free elections.

However, now that there is no chance for such a move, a judicial authority should be placed in control of the elections, he stated.

He said he was

ing a call issued at the organisation's seminar held last Wednesday at Abdul Hameed Shounan Foundation, which urged the government to open a real dialogue with the civic community and draw up a plan for reforming the country's election system.

The organisation has been receiving numerous complaints about the government's voter lists, which contained thousands of names of dead people and repeated names, and the government's removal of certain banners put up by candidates, according to Dr. Sweiss.

These developments, as well as some candidates illegally retaining voter cards, have caused confusion and weakened the government's credibility, particularly as

these same errors were reported to have occurred in the previous general elections, he said.

Dr. Sweiss criticised the government for forcefully quelling a demonstration that University of Jordan students planned to carry out to press for the creation of a Jordanian students federation.

Assem Rababa'a, a member of the JHRO administrative board, presented to the seminar, which was entitled "Legal Guarantees for Free and Fair Elections," a set of conditions that the organisation said should be provided to ensure that the upcoming elections would be fair and free.

Air transport conference to open next week

AMMAN (Petra) — Over 1,000 participants representing 200 airlines and manufacturers of commercial aeroplanes, as well as regional and international organisations, are expected to take part in a conference by the International Air Transport Association (IATA), which is due to open in Amman Monday, according to the head of the IATA regional office Khaled Mahdi.

In a statement, he said the participants will discuss challenges facing the air transport industry in the coming century and issues pertaining to energy, modernisation of air fleets, and airport services and taxes, among other relevant issues.

Mr. Mahdi said Amman was chosen as the venue for the IATA meeting due to the stable and secure situation in Jordan and the country's facilities.

The meeting here will be the first by IATA outside Europe and the U.S., he noted.

Preparations for the IATA meeting Wednesday were reviewed by the planning committee at the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, chaired by minister Akel Biltaji.

The committee said the four-day meeting will help market Jordan's archaeological and tourist sites.

The committee also reviewed plans for the development of the tourism industry between 1998 and 2002 and heard a report from Mr. Biltaji on the outcome of his trips to the U.S. and Istanbul, as well as his talks with the World Bank on financing Jordan's tourism projects.

What's Going On

CONCERT

* Musical performance by the Hannover Boys Choir and the orchestra of the National Music Conservatory at Al Hassan Ben Talal Auditorium, University of Jordan at 11:00 a.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Works by Sa'at Ibrahim entitled "The Soul Rest" at Hamourabi Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5536098), until Nov. 11.

* Paintings by Patricia Cudennec at the Freoch Cultural Centre, Jabal Weibdeh, until Nov. 26.

* Graphics exhibition by Abdul Wahab Abdul Mohsen at Baladna Art Gallery, (Gardens Street) (Tel. 5537598), until Nov. 5.

* Works by Bahra Rashid Al Khalifa at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, until Nov. 15. Also displaying a new collection of works by contemporary Arab artists (Tel. 643251/2).

NEWS IN BRIEF

Princess Basma opens sports centre

AMMAN (Petra) — Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Friday opened the Sports Centre of the Queen Zein Al Sharaf Development Complex and the Amman Children's Association near the Queen Alia International Airport. Princess Basma said the sports centre was a model of cooperation between different local organisations.

Voter card distribution extended until 5 p.m. today

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Interior Nathir Rashid Friday announced that, upon directives from Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and due to the great demand for voter cards, the mandate for distributing voter cards at the various centres will be extended until 5 p.m. today.

Second Floor Sale At Beit Al Bawadi

• Sale items 15-50% off
• All full price items 5% off
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Open daily from 8:00 - 6:00 except Fridays

We will be open Nov. 4

TeleFax 818624-828070

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Japan seeks to narrow gaps ahead of global warming talks

TOKYO (AFP) — Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto has ordered special envoys to be sent around the world in a last-ditch fight to narrow gaps over global warming ahead of a key conference, an official said Friday.

"To be very, very frank, the opinions of the member countries at the moment are still wide apart," a Foreign Ministry official said, announcing the diplomatic manoeuvre ahead of the December U.N. Climate Summit in Kyoto, Japan.

Talks in Bonn were to end later Friday and divisions are still gaping over positions for a treaty fixing a cap on greenhouse gas emissions that is to be debated at the Kyoto summit.

"We have a keen recognition that as chair country we have to make further strong efforts to make the conference successful," the official told a journalists' briefing.

"In this regard, we have

received an instruction from our prime minister to make the utmost diplomatic efforts."

The Kyoto summit follows up on the first World Environmental Summit, held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, which called for member states to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases by 2000 back to the levels of 1990.

The European Union has since proposed mandating a reduction of 15 per cent of the 1990 levels by 2010 but the United States wants to delay the reduction in emissions to below their 1990 levels until after 2012.

Japan has proposed a five-per cent reduction from the year 2008 to 2012, with the possibility of further modifications.

Following Mr. Hashimoto's orders, the Foreign Ministry official said Vice Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura would be dispatched to the United States on Nov. 3 and 4 to meet his U.S. counterparts.

Other senior officials would be sent around the globe, with ambassador for global environmental affairs Toshiaki Tanabe going to Italy and chief councillor of external affairs Hiroshi Hirabayashi to India and the Gulf.

The key aim would be to narrow differences over the emission of greenhouse gases before the Kyoto conference starts on Dec. 1, the foreign ministry official said.

He confirmed that Japan would also host informal vice ministerial talks in Tokyo on November 8 and 9 to seek to break the deadlock over action to prevent global warming.

The meetings would involve "industrialised nations" on Nov. 8 and a larger group of 21 members the following day.

The participants were expected to be: Australia, Argentina, Brazil, Britain, Canada, China, a European Union official, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Luxembourg,

Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Russia, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Tanzania, and the United States.

"We would like to make further serious strenuous efforts to let all countries come together to agree on certain terms and conditions for the agreement, thereby the Kyoto conference will be successful," the official said.

Earlier this month, the European Parliament's rapporteur on the climate summit charged that Japan had displayed an irresponsible lack of leadership in the countdown to the Kyoto Conference.

Carlos Pimenta said proposals from the Japanese government for cuts of less than five per cent in greenhouse gas emissions were completely inadequate.

"It is totally unacceptable and irresponsible in terms of the climate for the Japanese to show such a complete lack of political will when they are hosting the conference," the Euro-MP said.

British nanny found guilty of infant murder charges in U. S.

BOSTON, Massachusetts (AFP) — Louise Woodward, the 19-year-old British nanny charged with murdering an eight-month-old baby in her care, was found guilty late Thursday.

"I didn't do anything. I didn't hurt Matthew. I didn't do anything," Ms. Woodward sobbed as she broke down in tears upon hearing the decision that she committed murder in the second degree.

"Why did they do that to me," she cried. The verdict was delivered by a nine-woman, three-man jury after a three-week trial in Cambridge, Massachusetts that heard allegations she had committed the premeditated murder of eight-month-old Matthew Eappen by hitting his head against a hard surface.

Ms. Woodward, who came to the United States in June 1996 to spend a year working as a nanny, faces life in prison but with the possibility of release in 15 years.

"We were stunned by the verdict," Defence Attorney Barry Scheck told reporters outside the courthouse. Mr.

Scheck, who defended O.J. Simpson, said the defence team firmly believed in Ms. Woodward's innocence — she even passed a polygraph lie-detector test.

"This is a very tragic case," Mr. Scheck said. "We will continue to fight and we will present motions (to the judge) asking him to reconsider this verdict. If that fails we will take every appeal and we will do everything ... to correct what we think was a very bad verdict."

"Her parents are devastated ... I don't think there is anything one could say that could console them," said Andrew Good, another attorney on the defence team.

Ms. Woodward, who had spent eight months in jail, maintained remarkable poise throughout the trial, her appearance neat, her answers calm and controlled.

But the prosecution had painted a portrait of her as a liar who was more interested in her social life than in her job caring for children and who, when frustrated by her work, killed



British nanny Louise Woodward listens to the prosecution deliver their closing argument in a courtroom in Cambridge, Massachusetts (AP photo)



British nanny Louise Woodward listens to the prosecution deliver their closing argument in a courtroom in Cambridge, Massachusetts (AP photo)

Duma ratifies chemical weapons convention

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russia, the world's largest stockpiler of chemical weapons, Friday took the first step towards ratifying the 1993 international Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and warnings that the West would have to help with its implementation costs.

The lower house of parliament, the state Duma, voted 238 to 75 to ratify, with two abstentions. The draft is now expected to be put to the upper house, the Federation Council, on Nov. 4, and ultimately for signature by President Boris Yeltsin who supports it.

"Russia will ratify the convention," Vladimir Volkov, chairman of the Duma Defence Committee, told the deputies, "but the world community must take into account ... the state of the Russian economy."

The Duma in April postponed CWC hearings, saying Russia could not ratify it because of the cost of eliminating chemical weapons in the face of the country's "difficult economic conditions."

Russia is the only one of the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council not to have ratified the CWC, which bans development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons.

The CWC was opened for signature in 1993, and more than 160 countries, including Russia, have initialled the treaty since then. More than half have ratified it.

Although Russia was among the first to sign, the Communist-dominated Duma had until Friday failed to ratify it.

Mr. Volkov Friday said Russia's chemical weapons arsenal contained some 40,000 tonnes of poisonous substances and posed an international problem.

The United States, he said, possessed a comparable amount, but also had the economic means to ensure the implementation of the convention.

First Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov warned the Duma that refusal to ratify would harm Russia's long-term interests and could lead to sanctions against its chemical industry.

Armed Forces Chief-of-Staff Anatoly Kvashnin told deputies that toxic gas dating back to 1940 was stockpiled in seven locations, posing "a hazard to people now, because over time towns have spread near them."

"We have the technology and experienced people to destroy chemical weapons," he told deputies.

and the Defence Ministry believes it essential for Russia to join the convention," Mr. Kvashnin said.

Mr. Ivanov said that if Russia ratified the CWC, it could count on foreign countries covering 20 per cent of the costs of destroying chemical weapons.

He said the plan for destroying chemical stockpiles was phased over 15 years, at a cost of 32.8 trillion rubles (\$5.5 billion).

"The United States and Germany are already participating in the destruction programme (in Russia), and if Russia ratifies the convention the Netherlands and Italy will help finance it."

"If we join the convention, we can count on increased foreign investment in our chemical industry, and rapid modernisation of it," Mr. Ivanov said.

According to Duma Defence Committee Chairman Volkov, Russia's chemical weapons arsenal contain some 40,000 tonnes of poisonous substances.

Mr. Kvashnin said production of chemical weapons was halted in the former Soviet Union in 1987. "In current conditions, nuclear weapons have a deterrent function, but chemical weapons do not," he told deputies.

Chinese authorities seize thousands of fake CD-ROMs

HONG KONG (AFP) — Authorities in the south-eastern Chinese city of Guangzhou have seized over 22,400 fake CD-ROMs in a raid of more than 25 shops selling illegal computer software, a statement said here Friday.

Local officials in Guangdong province working with the Beijing Fair Trade Bureau conducted the raids on Sept. 24 following a tip-off from the Hong Kong-based Alliance Against CD-ROM Theft (AACT), the organisation said in the statement.

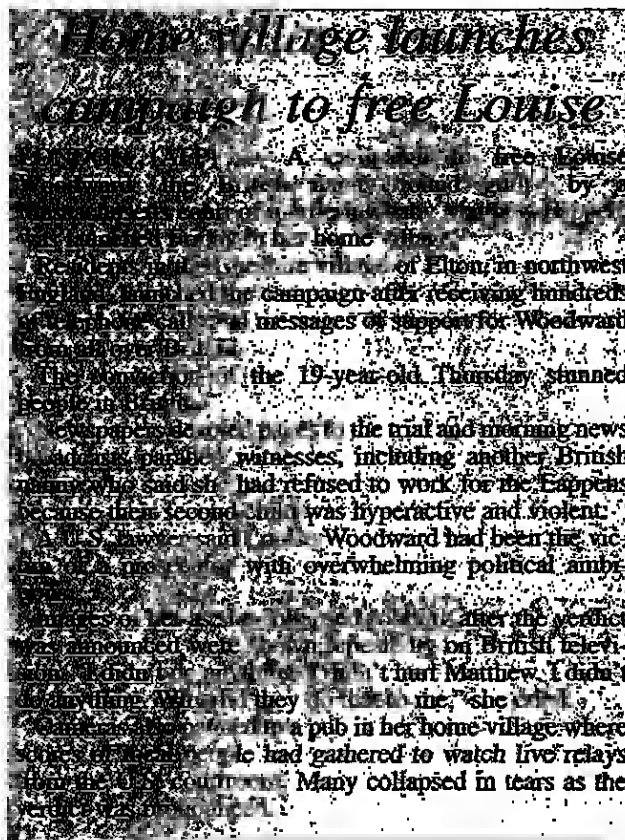
"We recognise that the CD-ROMs seized are only a very small fraction of the number of illegal CD-ROMs on the market, but this is certainly a promising development," AACT Vice President Tom Robertson said.

"We will continue to work closely with the Chinese officials and offer our support to assist them in stamping out the problem," he added.

The statement said the vast majority of counterfeit CD-ROMs are produced in southern China and smuggled through Hong Kong for distribution throughout Asia.

Widespread theft of intellectual property rights is a major stumbling block in trade relations between the U.S. and China. "Everyone involved in software publishing faces the loss of millions of U.S. dollars from software thieves," Robertson said.

Founded last year, AACT's members include the Business Software Alliance, games firm Sega Enterprises and major publishers such as Simon and Schuster and Encyclopaedia Britannica.



Thousands of fake CD-ROMs seized by Chinese authorities in Guangzhou.

'Animal farms' for transplant organs are coming soon, experts

GENEVA (AFP) — Hi-tech "animal farms" where genetically-engineered pigs will be bred specially to provide transplant organs for humans will soon become reality, experts assembled by the World Health Organisation said here.

The specialists have spent two days discussing the implications of xeno-transplants — that is transplants from animals to man — on the ethical level and with regard to the potential risk of exposing patients to new diseases.

Around 30 transplants of animal organs into humans have already been tried since 1963 but all have failed. The patients died a few hours to nine months after the operations, according to a report published by the University of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

But after being abandoned for some time, this technique is destined to resume because of the severe shortage of available human organs in relation to demand, participants said at the meeting which wound up Thursday.

"It is clear that human organs will never solve the shortage of organs for transplantation," said Dr. Rachel Bartlett from Britain.

Instead, human beings could be given the heart, liver or kidneys of an animal, genetically modified so the body will accept them.

"The technology will be very expensive. The organs will be bought and sold in a way that human organs are not normally. They will be a commodity," Dr. Bartlett predicted.

"These animals would be raised in a very special way in order to minimise the number of infections or types of infections agents," said Jeffrey Platt, professor of experimental surgery at Duke University in the United States.

Similarly, to avoid contaminating donor animals with human diseases, the animals would be raised "in special buildings, isolated, where staff shower and change clothes before they come in. There is a very rigorous screening procedure for that," Dr. Bartlett said.

To minimise the risks of rejection of organs, these animals would be modified genetically with the addition of one or more human genes. Once the animals were ready, they could be reproduced through cloning, the specialists said.

Mr. Platt said there was a vital need for animal transplants because of the dearth of human organs. He said about 2,000 heart transplants were carried out each year in the United States, when 40,000 were needed but there were no donors.

After initial experiments with chimpanzees, baboons or pigs, medical experts agreed that the pig was most suitable because its organs were practically the same size as those of humans.

Neither the Koran, nor the Old Testament would bar Muslims or Jews from accepting pig organs because their religion only forbade them to eat the meat of pigs, said Professor Abdullah Daar of Sultan Qaboos University in Oman who took part in the meeting.

At least, "a majority opinion (among scientists) in both religions is that it is not going to be a problem," he said.

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At least, "a majority opinion (among scientists) in both religions is that it is not going to be a problem," he said.

Asia-Pacific health officials seek cross-border AIDS control

BEIJING (AFP) — Health officials from South East Asia and Western Pacific countries are to set up measures to control the cross-border spread of AIDS, malaria and cholera by migrants, a World Health (WHO) official said Friday.

Antonio Tismo, a WHO official, said representatives from health ministries in 10 countries discussed cooperative measures to stop the spread of infectious diseases.

"The intention was to have a coordinated effort in controlling the diseases resulting from the migration of those residing at the border countries," Mr. Tismo told AFP at the close of a regional meeting here.

Countries most affected by the swift spread of diseases include China, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Burma, and Nepal, he said.

Mr. Tismo said the WHO, which sponsored the two-day meeting, expects more countries to join a similar conference to be held at a later date.

China is particularly concerned over the control of communicable diseases as it shares borders with several countries. Its rapid economic development has also created a floating population of migrant

workers and attracted grants from its neighbours.

The rise of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and other new infectious diseases as well as the resurgence of previously controlled diseases have set new challenges for disease prevention and control in many countries including China, Yinkui, Chinese health vice minister, told the China Daily.

Infectious diseases can only be controlled or eradicated through the concerted efforts of different countries, Mr. Yin said.

Chinese sex education officials recently attended an exposition on AIDS and sex education in Hong Kong to ask the experts in the territory to help in disseminating information on safe sex.

Government figures show nearly 6,000 people in China have contracted HIV but sex education workers say the figure could be anywhere between 150,000 and 210,000.

Some 3,000 cases of cholera were reported in China last year. The illness has been reported to strike the northern province of Inner Mongolia and the southern Chinese province of Guangdong during the typhoon season.

Australia to outlaw landmines, destroy stockpile — report

CANBERRA (AFP) — Australia will sign a treaty banning the use of anti-personnel landmines and plans to destroy its 60,000-strong stockpile of the devices, a report said Friday.

The Sydney Morning Herald said cabinet would formally agree to sign the Ottawa treaty that requires landmine stockpiles to be destroyed.

The Australian Defence Force, which has defended the use of landmines to protect remote installations, will still be allowed to use alternative mines that can be activated from command centres.

The decision represents a major victory for Foreign Minister Alexander Downer who has consistently supported the Ottawa treaty against resistance from the Australian Defence Force and Defence Minister Ian McLachlan.

Australia initially refused to sign the treaty despite a majority recommendation in favour of it from parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Treaties, whose Chairman Bill Taylor Friday welcomed the report.

Prime Minister John Howard's support for the

initiative at the recent Commonwealth meeting in Edinburgh and Downer's support for the ban were "a victory for humanity over military inflexibility", he said.

Mr. Taylor attributed the cabinet's decision, in part, to the death of anti-landmine campaigner Diana, Princess of Wales.

"Such a decision by federal cabinet would reflect strong public feeling about the tragedy of landmines and would be a fitting tribute to the efforts of the late Diana, Princess of Wales," he said.

Eleven die in Milan hospital blaze

MILAN (AFP) — Eleven people died Friday when a blaze broke out in a special treatment chamber of a Milan hospital, firefighters said.

The victims, ten patients and a nurse, died in the high-pressure hyperbaric chamber, public prosecutor Francesco Prete announced at the hospital.

The chamber is used to avoid infections in deep wounds and to treat people suffering from ailments such as the bends, encountered for example by divers who come to the surface too quickly.

According to initial inquiries, the fire disrupted the electrical system, causing a sudden drop in pressure. The patients

and nurse died of embolisms, which are air bubbles caused in the blood by the fall in pressure.

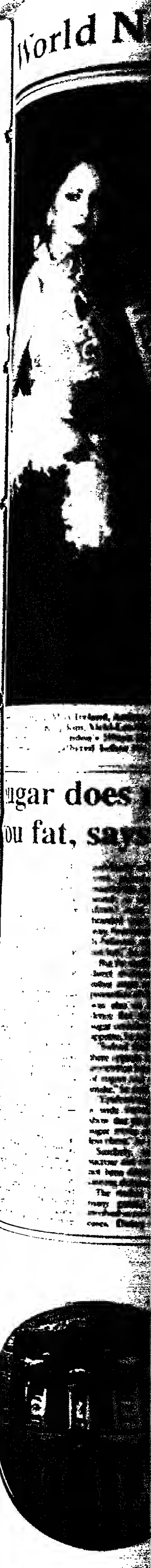
The chamber is a tunnel-like room that can hold 12 people seated, a hospital employee explained.

The fire broke out shortly before midday but was quickly extinguished

as more than 100 rescue workers raced to the scene.

The victims included an elderly lady who had just arrived in the Galeazzi hospital, a private orthopaedic institute in Bruzzano, in northern Milan.

A colleague of the nurse had to be evacuated by the firemen.





From left to right, Miss Ireland, Andrea Roche, Miss United States, Sallie Thousaint and Miss United Kingdom, Vicki-Lee Walberg, pose, Oct. 30, for the media during a news conference at London's Hilton Hotel where all the contestants for the Miss World competition gathered before the finals in the Seychelles on Nov. 22 (AFP photo)

U.N. special rapporteur wants issue of Rwandan rape addressed

KIGALI (AFP) — The U.N. special rapporteur for violence against women said Friday that the rape of women during the Rwanda genocide is a neglected matter that must be addressed urgently.

Rhadika Coomaraswamy, who is on a one-week visit to Rwanda, is in the country to assess ill-treatment of women both by the state and during the 1994 genocide of Tutsis by Hutu extremists and its aftermath.

"It is urgent to mobilise the international community to help Rwandese

women victims of sexual crimes during the genocide," she said.

"Nobody has focused on the matter," added Ms. Coomaraswamy, for whom the women victims of such crimes "constitute a separate category with separate needs."

The U.N. special rapporteur said that aid agencies and humanitarian organisations had only begun looking at the matter in the last six months, some two-and-a-half years after the genocide.

The international tribunal which is trying cases in connection

with the genocide has also only recently modified the charges against certain defendants to include their alleged sexual crimes.

A large number of women were raped in Rwanda between April and July 1994, when 500,000 to 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus were murdered.

The tribunal sitting in Arusha, northern Tanzania, on Oct. 24 heard evidence against the former mayor of Taba, Jean-Paul Akayesu, who is accused of incitement to rape.

Rwandan courts which have handed

down 200 verdicts since January have also not addressed the question, as few women have been prepared to testify to being raped and even less prepared to lodge complaints.

Social pressures and the prejudice to their marriage prospects are the reasons for this, according to a member of an association for the survivors of such atrocities.

The instances of rape during the genocide women were not simply used as a sexual object.

Ms. Coomaraswamy said. Rape was used to

humiliate and depersonalise the victims persecuted for the simple fact of being Tutsis. The perpetrators told their victims they would be raped to death or until they gave birth to a Hutu baby.

"Rwanda is also the first country where some women are accused of crimes against humanity and sexual violence," said Ms. Coomaraswamy, who is asking for the international community to provide funds to deal with the issue of rape there.

A report is due to be presented next April.

First case of Belgian 'mad cow' disease reported

BRUSSELS (AFP) — The first case of "mad cow" disease has been detected in a bovine in Belgium, the newspaper La Dernière Heure reported Friday.

Three successive brain tests of an animal suspected infected with bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) were positive. The tests were carried out by the Belgian National Institute of Veterinarian Research (INRV).

The INRV was not immediately available for comment but the Belgian Agriculture Ministry was to make a statement on the case at a press conference later Friday.

La Dernière Heure said INRV scientists had sent positive samples to a laboratory in Britain which was expected to give its opinion later this year.

Exports of British beef to other countries have been banned by the European Union following the announcement by British authorities last year of a possible link between BSE and the human brain-wasting illness Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease.

Britain has had by far the largest number of BSE cases in Europe. The disease is thought to have been passed on by animal feed containing the remains of sheep infected with a similar brain-wasting disease known as scrapie.

Indonesian police probe 24 firms, 24 individuals over forest fires

JAKARTA (AFP) — The Indonesian police are currently investigating 24 firms, including one foreign venture, and 24 individuals suspected of having started some of the forest fires which have sent a choking smoke over most of South East Asia for months, reports said Friday.

"From the 48 suspects, one is a foreign joint venture, 23 are Indonesian companies and 24 others are individuals," Police Major General Nurfaizi said, according to the Antara news agency.

Maj. Gen. Nurfaizi, who

heads the National Police's Detective Department, said the police were determined to take action against all parties, corporations and individuals responsible for starting forest fires.

He said the suspect may be brought to court if there was sufficient evidence to back charges of setting fires or violating environmental laws.

The criminal code provides up to life imprisonment for arson leading to the death of people, while the environmental law provides up to five years in jail and fines of 100 million

rupiah (\$27,777).

He said the suspected foreign venture was based in Riau province, Sumatra, and that 15 of the other companies suspected of starting fires were operating in Jambi province, also on Sumatra.

He gave no further details about the companies or the individuals.

Maj. Gen. Nurfaizi said fires have razed some 223,984 hectares (553,240 acres) of forest across the country, causing an estimated \$74 billion (\$20.5 million) in damage.

Non-governmental organisations here esti-

mate that the fires in Indonesia have razed up to 1.7 million hectares of forest and land area around the country.

The fires have sent up smoke over most of South East Asia since the middle of this year, causing serious air and sea traffic problems as well as health concerns.

Indonesian officials have said at least 17 people have died from haze-related ailments while cancer, asthma and acute respiratory infections were threatening more than 40,000 others in Kalimantan and Sumatra.

Sugar does not make you fat, says U.N. expert

YANUCA ISLAND, Fiji (R) — Sugar does not make people fat, does not cause diabetes, and cannot be held responsible for a range of other ills for which it is popularly blamed, a United Nations expert said Friday.

In a paper presented to the 1997 Asia Pacific Sugar Conference, William Clay of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) said other conditions wrongly blamed on sugar included heart disease, micronutrient deficiencies and hyperactivity in children.

But Mr. Clay's paper, entitled "Is sugar pure, white and deadly?" said sugar consumption could contribute to dental decay.

The FAO, a United Nations agency, organises the annual sugar industry conference, being held this year in Fiji.

Mr. Clay, who works for the agency's food and nutrition division, said significant strides had been made in the past 30 years of research into sugar, sugars, carbohydrates and dietary fibres. His paper pulled together some of those studies.

"Statements like 'white, pure

and deadly' or 'empty calories' were... picked up by the public, nutritionists and health professionals as well as the press (from) some scientists who branded sugar in a negative way, thus creating a still widely-believed myth about this nutrient," he said.

But the studies had found no direct evidence to implicate either sugar or starch in the promotion of obesity and there was also no conclusive evidence that the sweetness of sugar contributed to increased appetite, he said.

"Indeed findings show that there appears to be an inverse association between the intake of sugars and obesity and fat intake," he said.

"Epidemiological data from a wide variety of countries show that people with higher sugar intake are likely to be less obese," he said.

Similarly, studies showed sucrose and other sugars had not been directly involved in causing diabetes, he said.

The studies suggested that many genetic factors were involved in coronary heart diseases. Dietary factors influ-

enced these processes directly or via a range of risk factors.

Obesity was associated with an appreciable increase in the risk of coronary heart disease.

"(But) there is no evidence that sucrose (sugar) plays a causal role in the aetiology of coronary heart disease," he said.

It was true that table sugar contained no nutrients, Mr. Clay said. But data on nutrient intake showed there was no risk of mineral or vitamin deficiency, even when higher intakes of sugar were recorded.

The notion that sugar adversely affected human behaviour had circulated since the 1920s, he said. By mid-century sugar was associated with the condition called "attention deficit hyperactivity disorder."

Experts now declared there was no evidence to support the claim that refined sugar intake had any significant influence on either behaviour or cognitive performance in children, he said.

Chinese happy with president's reception in U.S.

BEIJING (AFP) — Chinese people appeared pleased Friday with the reception President Jiang Zemin has received in the United States following the first extensive news coverage of his visit.

"The Americans have apparently showed a lot of respect," said Wen Husheng, a 35-year-old fruit and vegetable seller at a small market in central Beijing.

Chinese television devoted 20 minutes Thursday night to the reception Mr. Jiang received at the White House, giving much coverage to the pomp and ceremony.

It did not provide any analysis of the visit, nor show any of the extensive protests that have dogged the venues where Mr. Jiang has appeared with U.S. President Bill Clinton.

"Jiang Zemin was well received, it shows that China is much more respected in the world,"

said Liu Naicheng, 58, who was having lunch in a small restaurant. Most of the customers there agreed.

"Jiang Zemin has opened a new stage in Sino-American relations," he said, echoing a theme expressed frequently in the national media. "China and the United States are the two biggest countries in the world, their relationship is very important for world peace."

In recent years, relations between Washington and Beijing had been chilly, Mr. Liu said. "But now that the leaders of the two countries have met, they will have a better understanding on commercial, economic and cultural grounds," he said.

Relations between the two countries disintegrated after the crackdown on China's democracy movement in Tiananmen Square in 1989, with human rights concerns leading to trade

disagreements.

Mr. Liu said there was now one major issue separating the two sides: Taiwan.

"If the Americans interfere in this Chinese domestic affair, then war will be inevitable and it will be the fault of the United States," he said.

China, which has regarded Taiwan as a renegade province since the end of the civil war in 1949, has not ruled out use of force should the island declare formal independence.

Zhang Shuangsheng, who has been selling office supplies for 25 years, said he was ready to take up arms to defend China's sovereignty should Taiwan declare independence. "I am a veteran," he said.

Mr. Zhang said he was happy that Mr. Jiang has gone to the United States and he called the visit "very important for the image of Jiang Zemin in the world."

American aid was important to help China develop, but was not indispensable because Beijing had "many relations with European countries," he added.

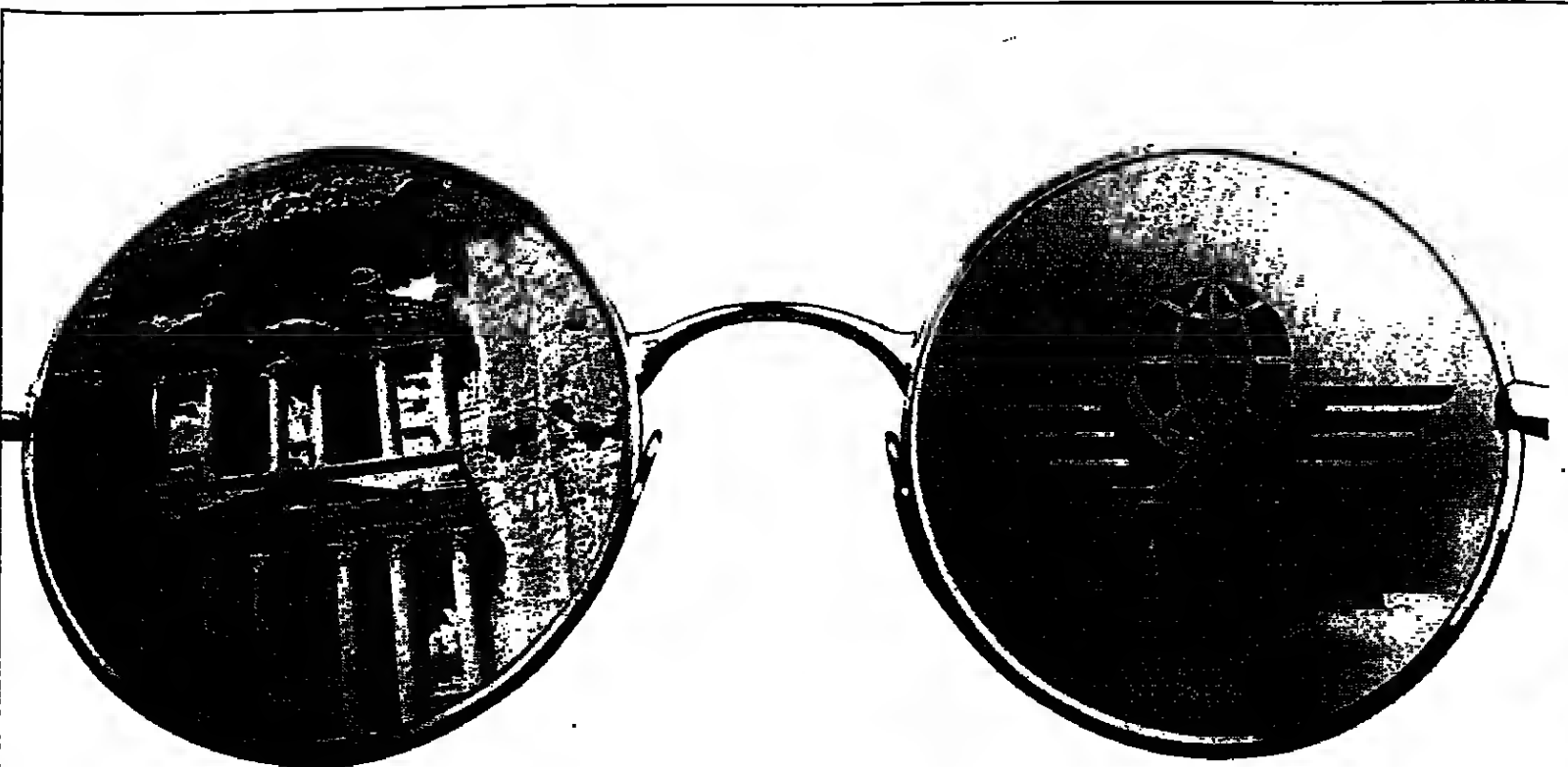
He said the United States had much influence in China "but the Chinese culture is the richest in the world, with 5,000 years of civilisation, and it is not possible to influence it."

Mr. Zhang also addressed the differences between the two countries concerning human rights.

"China has a socialist system that is different from the American system. You can't compare the two systems and the United States must not try to give lessons to China on this subject."

But he did concede that respect for human rights posed a problem for China.

"Here, we've done the same thing for 5,000 years. It is very difficult to change your habits overnight," he said.



Welcome to Jordan

Royal Jordanian warmly welcomes the participants of the 53rd IATA Annual General Meeting in Amman. May you have a productive and enjoyable stay

ROYAL JORDANIAN الملكية الأردنية

Reflecting the Change

Jordan Times

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Netanyahu's dark tunnel

THE FORECAST for the upcoming Washington meeting between Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy and Palestinian chief negotiator Mahmoud Abbas is understandably gloomy. It took quite a bit of arm-twisting by U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and Foreign Minister Levy to extricate a "concession" of sorts from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to facilitate the holding of the meeting by giving Levy a sort of a mandate to negotiate with the Palestinian side. Levy was the first to demand sufficient authority to deal effectively with Abbas after sensing that his boss was not really suing for peace in earnest. Upon the added pressure from Ms. Albright, Netanyahu grudgingly yielded somewhat to the call for serious negotiating sessions with the Palestinians in the U.S. capital.

On closer look, though, this latest Israeli negotiating tactic appears to be a big farce. Netanyahu, it seems, wants Levy to trade off a slowdown in settlement activity or freezing it for a limited period of time in return for Palestinian consent to shelve altogether the overdue deployment by the Israeli army in the Palestinian territories. In effect what the prime minister is offering is to put on hold his illegal actions if the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) forsakes the right to have Israel withdraw from the areas it has promised to vacate under Oslo and Hebron accords.

Netanyahu is thus making another mockery of the negotiating process by attempting to equate an illegal act with a legal right. This is of course typical of his state of mind and a true reflection of what he is determined to pursue in talks with the Palestinians. No wonder Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat quickly termed the projected Levy-Abbas talks as a complete waste of time.

The clear message from Netanyahu is that he is not about to honour the Oslo accords with the Palestinians come what may. He is obviously committed to rewrite Israel's, including his own agreements with the PNA to suit his agenda, which cannot be accepted under any circumstances. The Israelis know this, we know this and the whole world does too. The question that remains is why then the pretension that there is still a light at the end of Netanyahu's dark tunnel?

The fact that Palestinian-Israeli negotiations are held under the direct, watchful eyes of the U.S. could deprive Netanyahu of much, if not all, of his willingness to drag his feet. If President Bill Clinton and his secretary of state show real firmness and determination there is no doubt that Netanyahu's tactics will fail. Someone needs to stop Netanyahu's games, and clearly President Clinton is the one to do just that if he truly has the political will.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL ARAB AL YAWM'S Taher Adwan criticised the Arab countries' stand on the peace process saying that they should alter their tactics in light of Israel's refusal to comply with peace requirements. Why should the Arab leaders continue to uphold their staunch stand of commitment to the peace process when Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is openly doing everything in his power to scrap the Oslo accords, asked the writer. He said the Arabs were justified to declare that they would remain committed to the peace process when the Israelis, under the previous government, started to withdraw from the occupied Arab territories of Palestine, but since that withdrawal has stopped, the Arabs should realise that Israel is no longer interested in making peace. According to Adwan, the present Israeli government's policies are dangerous as they are designed to perpetuate Israel's occupation of Arab lands and expand the Jewish state at the expense of the Arab Nation. The writer said it is true that the Arabs might not be able to fight Israel and regain their territory for at least 10 years, but he said the Arabs can do much during the coming 10 years seeking appropriate methods for regaining their lost territory.

AL RA'Y'S Fakhri Kavar said the government has deliberately ordered that the names of suspects allegedly involved in drug trafficking operations be published by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, in order to tarnish the reputation of a candidate who represents the opposition groups. Kavar said the official information services have never published the full names of suspects involved in a crime, and only initials of names have occasionally appeared in the media especially when the suspects have not yet been convicted by the court, said the writer. He said the name of the son of a prominent candidate and the name of the candidate himself were reported by Petra in an outrageous manner while the suspect has not been tried by any court. He said furthermore the government had ordered the removal of a banner raised by the candidate because it discourages normalisation of relations with Israel, something which clearly indicates that the government considers this candidate as undesirable. Kavar said the opposition groups should raise their voices in protest and should do all they can to stop the government from slandering their leaders.

Jordanian Perspective

Election boycott proves counterproductive

By Dr. Musa Keilani

LESS THAN a week ahead of Jordan's parliamentary elections, it has become abundantly clear that the boycott announced by "opposition" parties has turned out counterproductive: It is clear that the 13th Jordanian Parliament will indeed include all colours of the Kingdom's political spectrum and will truly reflect our country's political fabric.

It is interesting to note that some charismatic leaders of the Islamic movement decided to break ranks and run as independents on the elections. By virtue of their individual capabilities, they stand a very strong chance of making it to the House of Parliament on Nov. 4. Prominent among them is Dr. Abdullah Akaileh, a former deputy and minister representing the Muslim Brotherhood in the 1991 cabinet.

The nationalist pro-Iraq Baath Party is fielding four candidates: Khalil Haddadin (Amman), Nashat Hamarneh (Madaba), Said Al Kayed (Balqa) and Nasr Al Rawashdeh (Karak). The Communist Party too has two candidates: Emily Naffa'a in Amman and Sa'ad Abbadi in Salt. The leftist Progressive Democratic Unionist Party has announced four candidates: Issa Mdanat in Amman, Musa Maaytah in Karak, Bassam Haddadin in Zarqa and Mustafa Shneikat for Balqa.

The pan-Arab nationalist party, Arab Land, has

Mohammad Oran running in Tafleeh.

These parties, along with the mainstream Islamist movement represented by the Islamic Action Front (IAF), are indeed the backbone of Jordan's political opposition. Since the IAF is not participating in the elections, the formal Islamist presence in the next Parliament will be as strong as it was in the former House by virtue of the expected victory of candidates equally charismatic and equally committed though they are not IAF members paying membership fees to the movement.

It is heartening to know that at least 42 of the candidates are holders of doctorate degrees and are competing with tribal leaders on an equal footing, giving an additional colour to our new Parliament.

The point is that the next Parliament will see the government meeting the same political opposition as the case was in the last House. It is clear that the winners in the elections will include independents as well as ideologists from the far right to the far left, centrists, tribal leaders, former Fateh members and all components of each stratum of our society.

It is regrettable that the election law does not allow Jordanians abroad to elect their parliamentarians. But it is more regrettable that each 1,000 bedouins are entitled to have one deputy while every 30,000 residents of the

refugee camps in Baqaa, Zarqa or Schneller will elect one deputy despite the fact that both groups are full tax-paying citizens.

Furthermore, the quota system to allocate nine seats to the Christians and three to the Circassians will only lead to ossify differences rather than contribute to creating the hoped-for multi-racial, multi-creedal Jordan.

This quota system is part of an obsolete Turkish heritage of protection which our new generations have outgrown. In sum the new Parliament will be truly representative of the Jordan we are living through.

Those who have opted to stay out by their own choice should be crestfallen by the course of things in the run-up to the elections. They have elected to keep themselves away from the heart of democracy in the country at a time when democratisation is taking roots. They cannot feign that their decision served their voters or their political ideologies, i.e., if they call themselves politicians: What they have done is to remove themselves from the active political scene, thus denying not simply themselves but their supporters the chance to be heard and heeded in the legislature.

Their absence will indeed be missed, but Jordanians have the comfort of knowing very well that their next Parliament will take them around another landmark.



Columnists debate elections, peace process, Iraq

REVIEWED BY

ELIA NASRALLAH

LOCAL DAILIES last week centred on the coming elections, local affairs, the Middle East question and Iraq.

Al Dustour's Ahmad Shaker said two issues have marred the preparations for the general elections saying both these issues are connected with the distribution of the voter cards. The government committed a grave blunder, said Shaker, by illegally allowing candidates to obtain the voter cards of the electorate in their respective districts because as it turned out that many of the candidates failed to deliver the cards or chose to refrain from doing so, according to the writer. He said, also, the lists of voters showed incidences of many names recurring and appearing in different electoral districts as well as in the same district. Shaker said both matters have caused embarrassment to the Ministry of Interior which is overseeing the elections.

Fakhri Kavar of Al Ra'i reiterated the government's pledge over the past weeks that it was not interfering in the elections nor influencing the public's decision. But as it turned out, said Kavar, teachers at government schools have been receiving memoranda from the Ministry of Education urging them to encourage the students and their parents to go to the polls on Nov. 4. He said teachers were asked to submit reports on the situation after they carried out their task of urging the students and their parents to vote, but nothing was mentioned in the memos about penalties the teachers might face if they fail to carry out the ministry's orders. The government has made its voice heard loud and clear about being neutral, but behind the scenes it has been influencing the public to participate in the elections, Kavar said.

At Al Aswaq, Rashid Hassan criticised the government for failing to openly declare the names of the candidates who the government accused of tampering with the voter cards and referred them to the public prosecutor. We cannot understand the government's stand with regard to this grave issue and we demand that the government publish the names of those who manipulated the situation and who forged the cards or concealed

them to influence the elections, Hassan said. We believe that the perpetrators deserve to be held accountable for their misconduct and their misbehaviour, said the writer who stressed that those who tampered with the public trust do not deserve to represent the people in Parliament and deal with issues of national interest. Tareq Masarweh of Al Ra'i cites as an example of abuse of the voter lists and cards distribution by reporting that a colleague working for the paper had received voter cards of her father, her uncle and her brother, who have been dead for more than a decade. Criticising the mishandling of the preparations of the voter lists and the distribution of voter cards, the writer said the concerned authorities have kept the public pre-occupied with the cards issue and have arrived at no solution to the problem. Why should there be a voter card since forgery is expected to occur, and why can't the public vote by producing identity cards, asked the writer who also reported the case of some of his relatives in Madaba and Karak who were each handed two voter cards for the coming elections instead of one.

THE WEEK IN PRINT

Daoud Qaurneh, an Al Arah Al Yawm writer, said the relatives of Jordanians held in Israeli jails still awaiting their release as promised by the government. Despite reassurances from the government that it has received notification that the detainees will be released by the Israeli authorities, nothing has happened, and the detainees and their families are deeply concerned, said the writer. Urging the government to create a special committee to pursue the release of those detained persons, the writer said, in other countries governments do everything possible to secure the release of their citizens and exert all kinds of pressure to achieve this end. Qaurneh said he holds the government responsible for the failure of securing the release of the detainees because it had released the Mossad agents on condition that these detainees be released.

Al Aswaq's Yahya Mahmoud said that as the government hiked the price of water in compliance with World Bank instructions as part of the

economic restructuring programme, the measure will cause concern not only to the public who will be paying higher rates for water consumption for domestic purposes, but also to the country's industry and agriculture. Mahmoud said that since the increase in the price of water will affect certain industrial businesses which depend on water in production processes, the price of manufactured goods will automatically be raised. He said it is not fair to place additional burdens on the public and demand that they alone bear the responsibility of implementing the economic restructuring programme.

According to Danud Suleiman of Al Arab Al Yawm, Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov's visit to the Middle East achieved nothing because Moscow has long abandoned its role as a peace co-sponsor. The Russians have given the Americans a free hand in the Middle East question and proved so weak in the face of the U.S. with the collapse of the Soviet empire and its influence in the region. Suleiman said. He said if Moscow is really concerned about the deteriorating situation in the region and if it is intent on demanding that the Arabs pay Russia the debts for the weapons they purchased from the Soviet Union, it should exert pressure on the Americans to stop imposing a siege on the Arabs and force Israel to abide by the U.N. resolutions.

Huda Fakhouri of Al Dustour criticised the U.N. for not stopping Turkey from repeatedly occupying northern Iraq. Fakhouri said the Turks have invaded Iraq as Iraq had invaded Kuwait, but the U.S. and the U.N. remain silent about such aggressions and in fact condoned the Turkish moves. The writer said that likewise Iran committed aggressions on the Arab Nation by raiding positions near Baghdad and is continually occupying islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates but nothing has been done in this case either. Furthermore, Eritrea occupied islands in the Red Sea belonging to Yemen, and the U.N. and the U.S. did nothing to address the situation, the writer said. She said that only wherever U.S. interests are affected and only when Arab states are accused of committing aggression will the U.S. secure a U.N. resolution for war on the Arabs.

LETTERS

Towards a gender blind state

To the Editor:

THE SURVEY of the Oslo Institute of Applied Science on women's participation in the forthcoming elections in Jordan makes depressing reading. Patriarchal societies like ours are, by their very nature resistant to the emancipation of women. Mysogony, an important component in the psychological make-up of patriarchal societies also plays a major, albeit a sub-conscious, role in our need to dominate our womenfolk.

We, Arab men, whether young, highly schooled, holders of prominent or humble positions, are all gripped by that most crippling affliction of machismo. This, I hasten to add at a time when the very word has become synonymous with backwardness, intellectual impairment and social paralysis in all civilised societies.

It is an indisputable fact of life today that no country can fully develop its institutions, become genuinely democratic, modern and forward looking if it treats one half of its population differently from the other half. Civilised states are gender blind!

What can be done to correct this historical anomaly in our country? How can we cease being the victims of our so-called customs and traditions, as I am often told by my interlocutors whenever this subject is broached? The solution put forward by the author of the survey that "female candidates' best chance is to opt for support from other women" is lame and, in the long term, ineffectual.

What is needed is concerted and focused political action from the top.

1) In the short term the new cabinet which will be formed after the elections should have in it a Ministry of Women's Affairs. This, by the way is not as strange as it sounds: many European countries already have such ministries with the aim of tackling women's concerns and welfare. This new government department will vigorously lead the campaign of education and enlightenment in society to rid us (both women and men) of the taboos that continue to cloud our vision. This new ministry also ought to take a very close look at the morasse of different laws that effect women's civil rights.

2) In the long term (and I don't mean the distant future) our government should look at the prospect of introducing some form of minimum number of seats for women in each electoral district. To start with let us say that 25 per cent of all seats in parliament shall be allocated to women, with the intention that this quota shall rise to 50 per cent in due course. After all women do represent 50 per cent of the population don't they? If other groups in our society are represented in parliament on a pro rata basis: The Christians, the Circassians, etc. surely why not women? Positive discrimination introduced by the Kennedy administration in the early 60s to promote equality and civil rights for African Americans has gone a long way in enfranchising that all important section of American society.

What the Oslo survey also omitted to mention is the importance of role models in society. Women in Jordan have almost no visible high profile role models to emulate. The quota I mentioned above will fill such an important vacuum. You will be surprised how many talented and public spirited women there are once the heavyweight of crippling traditions have been lifted off their shoulders.

Do our leaders have the political will to break with the past? Do they have the courage to introduce what will inevitably be an unpopular measure in its early days?

Dr. Kamal Tawfik Nimri
London

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any issue they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld upon request but only under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing and abridging.

U.S. official urges Arabs not to link MENA conference with ups and downs of peace process

By Ghalia Alul
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Despite the decision of the majority of Arab countries to boycott the Doha Middle East and North Africa (MENA) summit, an increasing number of international participants are signing up for this big annual business gathering, aimed at encouraging direct foreign investments in the region, a senior U.S. official said Thursday.

In a satellite interview with journalists from Egypt, Jordan and Morocco — the host countries of MENA previous summits — the American under-secretary of state for economic, business and agricultural affairs, Stuart Eizenstat, urged Arab countries not to "link the (MENA) conference with the ups and downs of the peace process."

"What investors want is to know that the Middle East will remain open for business, will remain (focused) on creating commercial opportunities even when the peace process has low points as it does now," Mr. Eizenstat stressed.

So far, Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, Libya, Sudan, United Arab Emirates and Oman have announced

their boycott of the Nov. 18-19 summit because of the right-wing Israeli government's hardline policies towards the Arab-Israeli peace talks.

Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Egypt, Kuwait and Morocco's participation linked their participation to improvement in peace talks over the next two weeks.

Mr. Eizenstat emphasized the importance of the summit by pointing out that over 600 participants from all over the world have already signed, including 80 American companies as well as 20 Japanese firms. Such a participation demonstrates the significance that the international community attaches to this conference.

"It will be a tragedy if the Middle East countries turn away from this activity," he said.

"This is an extraordinary outpouring of business interest in the Middle East that wouldn't have occurred except for the publicity that these conferences have generated and the capacity that these conferences have given the countries of the region to show the economic reforms they have made," Mr. Eizenstat added.

Addressing a common

concern that the small and medium size enterprises (SMEs) lack due attention at MENA, Mr. Eizenstat acknowledged the need to emphasize SMEs and mentioned the possibility of specially organized seminars and linkups for these firms at future MENA summits.

He announced that the United States has virtually completed the designation of Irbid as an industrial zone and, as such, all products from the zone will qualify for duty free access to American markets.

Mr. Eizenstat stopped short of specifying the exact amount of monetary assistance Jordan will receive from the U.S. in 1998, but said that within the next two weeks, Jordan will become the fifth largest recipient of American economic aid.

Jordanian Ambassador to Washington Marwan Muasher Wednesday said the U.S. Congress has approved a sum of a \$225 million in aid to Jordan for the 1998 fiscal year.

Dr. Muasher said a \$150 million will be disbursed as economic aid and \$75 million will be given in military assistance to the Kingdom.

Australia considering Aqaba as reexport port for Mideast

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Deputy Premier Minister of Commerce and Trade of Western Australia, Henry Cowan, met with the board members of the Jordanian Businessmen Association (JBA) Thursday and expressed hope that bilateral economic relations will be strengthened.

Speaking at a meeting with JBA Deputy Chairman Thabet Taher, Mr. Cowan said his country was looking forward for genuine cooperation between the private sectors of Jordan and Australia. He added that Australia was considering Aqaba as a point for reexporting Australia's products to various parts of the Middle East region.

He said that the port's central geographical location and the technical facilities at the harbour have prompted Australia to examine this venue.

Referring to his visit to Jordan, he said it was designed to review areas for investment prospects and push for joint projects involving Australian and Jordanian business communities.

Mr. Taher explained to the Australian guest the recent political and economic developments in the region in general and Jordan in particular.

Mr. Taher outlined the economic reform programme and highlighted laws aimed at attracting foreign and local investments, including new laws on investment promotion, income tax, customs and registration of companies, labour and securities have been introduced to stimulate the national economy.

Mr. Taher noted that foreign investors can have 100 per cent equity in projects in all sectors except mining, trade, services and construction.

Noting that Jordan has initiated the process for joining the World Trade Organisation, Mr. Taher said the government has concluded free trade agreements with a number of Arab countries in order to integrate the Jordanian economy with that of the region.

High oil exports, investments boost UAE balance of payments

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has a surplus in its balance of payments thanks to a rise in oil and gas exports and income from investments, official figures released have showed.

Despite a sharp increase in imports and financial transfers by the Gulf country's dominant foreign community, the balance of payments recorded a large surplus in 1995 and 1996.

It had a negligible surplus in the previous two years and a deficit in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

The figures by the Central Bank showed the balance of payment, a key indicator of economic health in International Monetary Fund standards, had a surplus of 2.78 billion dirhams (\$757 million) in 1995 and 2.28 billion dirhams (\$621 million) in 1996.

The surplus was recorded despite a surge in capital outflow caused by a sharp increase in government transfers and high remittances by expatriate workers, who account for nearly two thirds of the UAE's 2.4 million people.

Government transfers and private capital outflow jumped to around 25 billion dirhams (\$6.80 billion) in 1996 from about 12 billion dirhams (\$3 billion) in 1995, the Central Bank said.

The report gave no reason for the higher outflow but bankers said it was mainly caused by payment of around seven billion dirhams (\$1.9 billion) in compensation for the nearly 250,000 creditors of the liquidated Bank of Credit and Commerce International, which was controlled by Abu Dhabi.

Remittances by expatriates, mostly Asians, Africans and Arabs, totalled around 11.5 billion dirhams (\$3 billion) in 1996.

Total imports increased to 94.9 billion dirhams (\$25.3 billion) in 1996 from 86.2 billion dirhams (\$23.4 bil-

lion) in 1995.

But such increases in cash outflow and imports were offset by a rise in oil prices of more than three dollars, which boosted the UAE's crude export earnings to around 54 billion dirhams (\$15 billion) from about 44.5 billion dirhams (\$12 billion), according to the planning ministry.

Gas exports, mostly liquefied natural gas, grew to around 6 billion dirhams (\$1.7 billion) from 5.5 billion dirhams (\$1.49 billion). This boosted total exports to around 122 billion dirhams (\$33 billion) in 1996 from about 107 billion dirhams (\$29 billion) in 1995.

Income from overseas investment grew to around 18 billion dirhams (\$5 billion) from 17.4 billion dirhams (\$4.7 billion). The income was below two billion dollars in late 1980s.

Bankers said the balance of payment was also supported by a decline in the UAE's foreign aid due to growing domestic development needs and a weakening in crude prices over the past decade.

Such aid has plummeted to a few \$100 million a year from an annual average of two billion dollars in early 1980s, when oil prices were above \$30 a barrel.

"It is a good economic sign that the UAE is enjoying a surplus in its balance of payments at a time when it is importing more for its growing development needs. Defence commitments are also draining its coffers and this is putting further pressure on the payments situation," a UAE banker said.

Economists expected the balance of payments to remain in a surplus this year because of firm oil prices and higher LNG sales following expansion in the country's gas facilities to meet growing demand by its Japanese clients.

Air France, RJ sign agreement

LAST OCTOBER 2nd, an agreement was signed between Jordan Civil Aviation Authority and the French Civil Aviation Authority at the International Conference Centre in Paris. This agreement stipulates that both national carriers will operate four flights weekly between Amman and Paris starting from April 1, 1998. Air France will operate four direct flights as of that date between Amman and Paris instead of three flights presently via Damascus. Air France will increase its seat capacity by 150 per cent to Jordan. This will answer to the increasing demand in both fields of tourism and business and will participate actively to the development of Jordan.

High oil prices boost 1996 Arab economy, cut deficit

ABU DHABI (AFP) — A surge in oil prices coupled with reforms boosted the Arab economy by 7.9 per cent in 1996, cut a budget deficit and bridged a current account gap, according to an official report.

The increase in oil prices by \$3.4 a barrel to \$20.3 pushed up the income of the Arab league's 22 members to \$120.7 billion in 1996 from \$98.8 billion in 1995, the League said in its 1997 economic report.

From 6.3 per cent in 1995, growth in the combined gross domestic product (GDP) stood at 7.9 per cent in current prices, said the report, excerpts of which were published in the United Arab Emirates daily Al Bayan.

This boosted GDP to around \$568.9 billion at the end of 1996 from \$526.9 billion at the end of 1995.

"The improvement was caused by the increase in oil prices and the positive results of economic reform programmes in Arab countries," it said.

Arab economies are highly vulnerable to oil price fluctuations as crude sales provide more than two-thirds of the total income of the region's oil producers.

Members without oil rely heavily on financial assistance and remittances from

Arab producers.

Nearly 70 per cent of Arab revenues in 1996 were earned by Saudi Arabia and its five partners in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) given their high oil output.

The surge also sharply boosted GCC economies although most of them have yet to embark on reforms.

The league's report on economic and social developments in members showed that the improvement in income was combined with spending cuts to trim the Arab budget deficit to 3.2 per cent of GDP in 1996, from 4.2 per cent in 1995.

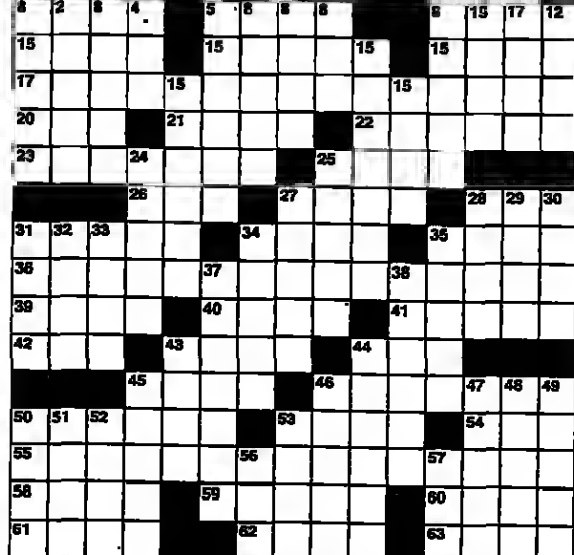
The balance of payments, a key indicator of sound economic performance, recorded a surplus of around \$8.3 billion compared with a deficit of about \$2.2 billion in the same period.

DEBATE

Between Toujan Feisal and Emily Nafa' at 7:00 p.m. today. Location: Al-Malhas Divan (1st Circle - Behind Malhas Hospital).

THE Daily Crossword

ACROSS
1 Hunted animals
5 Church part
9 Messy person
13 Yemeni port
14 Hot beverage
16 French writer
17 Familiar trip
20 Gold, in Madrid
21 Tall grass
22 — down (discounted)
23 Answer
25 African river
26 Kalep
27 Coastal city
28 Watched
31 Raccoon's cousin
34 — au rum
35 — mater
36 Mirage
39 Chocolate cookie
40 "Chair de"
41 Center
42 Soap ingredient
43 Land measure
44 Health resort
45 Jogger's gait
46 Roof part
50 Knife case
53 Headliner
54 Operate
55 Postcard greeting
58 Too
59 Grassy plain
60 Article
61 Joy
62 Dark, to a poet
63 Simple



by George Urquhart

10/27/97

10/27/97

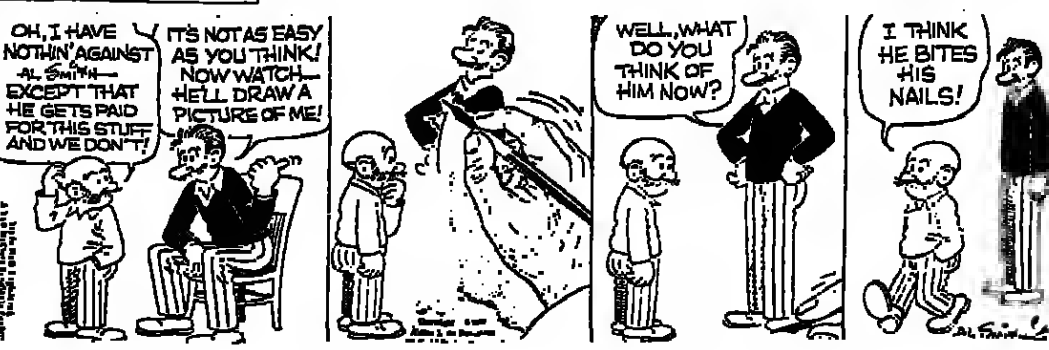
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 1997

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) This would be a great day for shopping, if you had the money. As it is, you're tempted to max out the credit cards. You want to go camping or do something else exciting. You need new gear. Don't forget you have to pay back what you charge. Those numbers represent actual money.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) It's Halloween. Your partner is in a feisty mood. There's no point in arguing. He or she will be obeyed, no matter what you think. You can put in the correction later, after your sweetie pie simmers down a little. Hopefully, no lasting harm will be done.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You're in the mood to throw things out, so clean the garage. All that stuff you've accumulated needs to be sorted. The magnificent stuff is all at the bottom of the stack. Spend today getting ready for a huge garage sale tomorrow. You'll make enough to buy new toys.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Spend this entire day snuggled in the arms of your loved ones. There's so much you have to talk about, and so many things to do without talking. It doesn't matter what you do. Your main objective is to reestablish your close bonds. This is a day of healing for you all.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You're pretty much stuck at home. Somebody else is telling you what to do, and you don't like that. You should be able to get out and play with your sweetie later this evening. Is there another party tonight? You don't need another outfit. You always go as who you are anyway.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Focus on whatever you want to learn and it will be absorbed into your cerebral cortex. It's an amazing phenomenon. Conditions have to be just right — and they are! Feed as much as you can to your voracious brain cells all day. Don't let this opportunity go to waste.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) This is a good day to shop with your mate. He or she might buy an expensive gift, for you! Cruise your favourite stores and see what happens. In return, all you have to do is learn a new game. Don't worry. It'll be more fun than you thought. You might even win.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) The objective is not to impress your friends. You've already done that. Now you need to concentrate on making money and increasing your influence. There's something needed that you could provide. Find the problem and get a technical friend to solve it. You get the credit and the cash.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) People are in a whiny mood, which you find annoying. You like honesty. You probably went to the Halloween party dressed as yourself. Well, maybe higher self. Let someone know his or her coo game isn't working. Follow through on a promise, but don't go on a guilt trip.

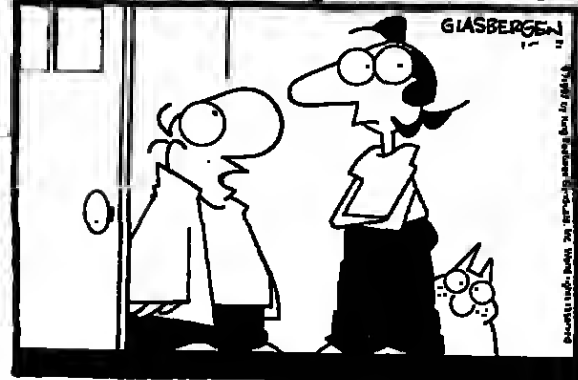
CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) The party flag is up. If your sweetheart's giving you a bad time about something you forgot, promise you'll do it tomorrow. That's a sure bet, because by then he or she won't put up with your stalling anymore. Meanwhile, party hearty.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) If an older person doesn't want to hear it, why bother? Try again later, when your chance of being heard is better. Meanwhile, make big plans with friends. You can't get away right now, but you can by tomorrow. Schedule something you'll all eagerly anticipate.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Start out on your adventure this morning. The afternoon is better for keeping a previous commitment. Of course, if you've always promised yourself you'd take a world cruise someday, you could do that this afternoon. There are plenty of opportunities waiting. Pick one.

Birthstone of November: Topaz — Tiger's Eye

THE BETTER HALF



JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

YURLS

MOGAD

QUIROL

DRYBOW

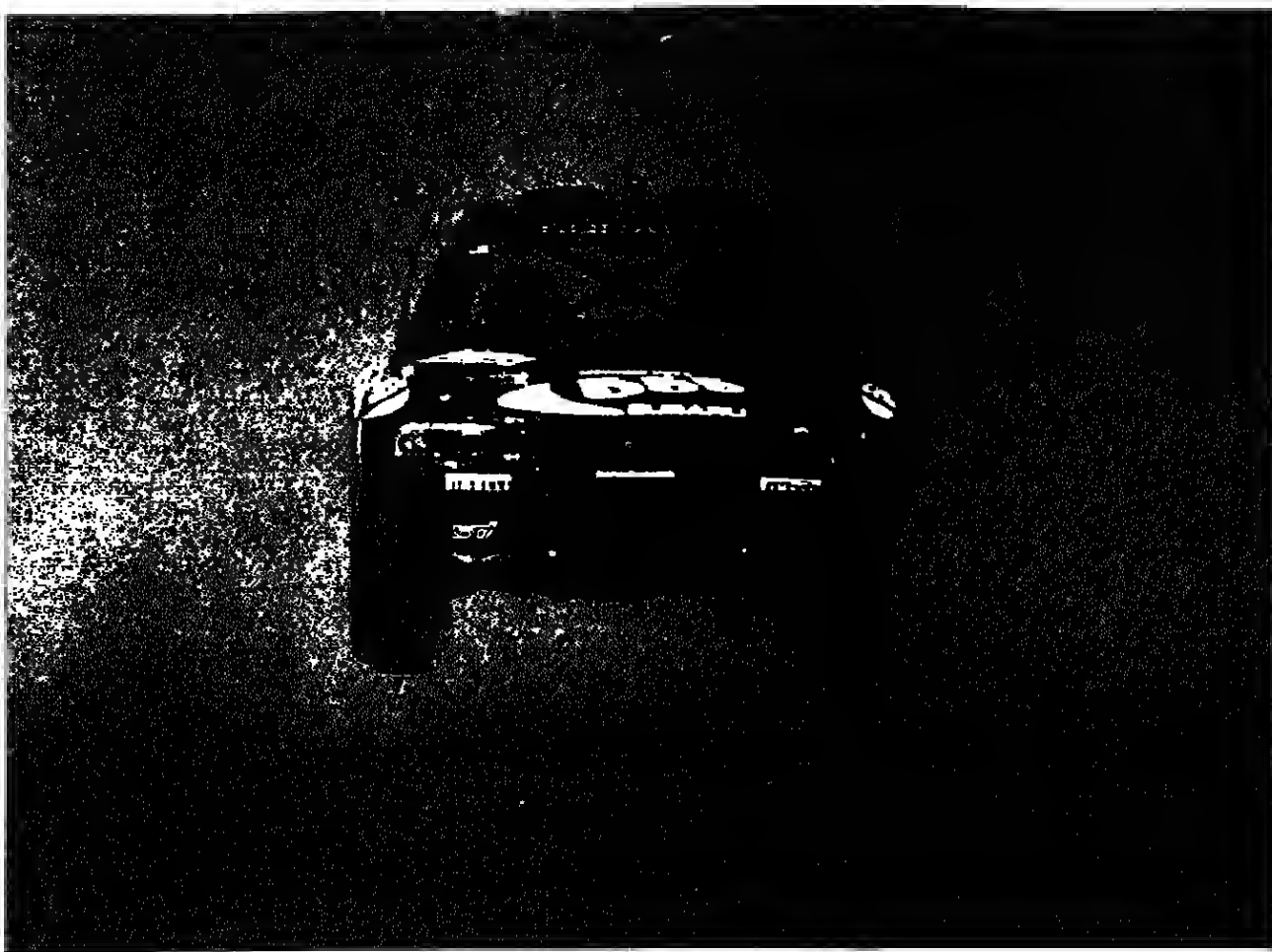


Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here: _____

Saturday's Jumbles: ELITE SQUAD POETIC INTENT

Answer: What the irate customers gave the phone company — A LOT OF STATIC



Britain's Colin McRae and co-driver, Nicky Grist, jump their Subaru Impreza over a hump during the Muresk stage of the Australian Rally October 31. They covered the 6.81km gravel track in three minutes 29 seconds (Reuters photo)

McRae jumps into early lead in Aussie rally

PERTH (AFP) — Former world rally champion Colin McRae had a slender nine second lead after the opening leg of the Rally Australia here on Friday.

"So far so good," said McRae afterwards, who is being trailed by fellow Briton Richard Burns in a Mitsubishi.

But the Scot got a shock in the ninth stage when his Subaru began to rattle and vibrate after a heavy landing.

"It turned out that we'd bent the roll bar at the front end but the technicians changed it at the service and it did not cause us any other problems," explained McRae.

Finland's Tommi Makinen, trying to retain the world championship title he won last year, finished the day in sixth place, one minute 41 seconds behind McRae.

Carlos Sainz, regarded as probably the world's best all-round rally driver and still chasing a win in the Australian round after six starts finished the day in fourth place, 51

seconds in arrears.

"I have finished third here, as well as my second, and one day or another I will win in Australia. Anything is still possible," said the 35-year-old Sainz.

McRae's teammate Kenneth Eriksson lead after eight of the 11 stages but then he hit a rock, severely damaging his car's suspension, and dropped back to finish in fifth place, one minute 18 seconds back.

"We went into the penultimate stage with a four second lead over Colin but then hit a loose rock. The suspension on the front right corner collapsed. It was disappointing for this to happen when you are leading," said the Swede.

Australia advised to improve security for Sydney Games

SYDNEY (AFP) — Security procedures on Sydney's public transport should be reinforced to avoid any terrorist incidents at the 2000 Olympics, the games security chief said.

Speaking after the disclosure Thursday that a bomb had been found on a commuter ferry, commander Paul McKinnon said Olympic preparations had to ensure "standard operating procedures are applied in a way that reflects the international focus and responds to a whole range of threats."

"People lose sight of standard operating procedures and some slack comes I guess, in the way that they're applied," he said.

The crude bomb, made from several litres of flammable liquid and an electric detonator, was left in a sports bag under a seat on a ferry that plies Sydney harbour from the surfing suburb of Manly six weeks ago.

When a crewman found the bomb

on the 1,100-passenger boat on September 21, it had been activated and the wires burned, but it had failed to explode.

Security procedures for the games will be examined following the ferry bomb case, New South Wales state Olympics Minister Michael Knight told reporters.

Police kept the bombing a secret until they appealed Thursday for public help with their investigations.

Detective Inspector Phil Rogerson noted similarities with the bombings on Sydney underground railway stations over the past year, but police had not yet established a definite link with the ferry incident.

The subway bomber used plastic bottles filled with accelerant to cause several blasts in toilets.

On December 29 a bomb was found on a station platform after it had failed to explode because a single wire was loose.

The package contained a note say-

ing "Happy New Year," which promoted emergency services to mobilise in fear of a massive attack on packed stations during New Year's Eve.

A series of chemical bomb attacks left more than 30 people injured across Sydney's eastern suburbs in the first six months of this year.

"There are always scares, and we can learn from these things along the way, and we are keen to upgrade our procedures and learn," Knight said.

"I'm not so much worried about the things that go wrong now, because you can learn from them," he said.

"I am more worried about the things you're not expecting to go wrong in 2000, they are the things that are worrying," Knight said after a meeting in Canberra Thursday with Federal Sports Minister Andrew Thomson.

Paris Indoor Open

Kafelnikov win leaves Rusedski waiting

PARIS (AFP) — Russia's Yevgeny Kafelnikov kept Greg Rusedski waiting for official confirmation of a place in next month's ATP Championships in Hanover today when he scored a three-set victory over the British left-hander to reach the semi-finals of the \$2.5 million Paris Indoor Open.

Kafelnikov, 23 and a finalist twelve months ago, survived a barrage of 23

aces from the world's biggest server to score a 6-4, 3-6, 6-3 win in just 1hr 25mins.

The 1996 French Open champion, who is the fifth seed, now plays either world number-one Pete Sampras of the United States or eighth-seeded Thomas Muster of Austria for a place in Sunday's final.

Despite the defeat Rusedski, who is due to play in Stockholm next week

(the last tournament before the ATP Championships), remains a strong favourite to take one of the five remaining places in the end-of-season showpiece. The win also keeps alive Kafelnikov's hopes of reaching the Championships.

So far only Pete Sampras, Michael Chang and Patrick Rafter have officially qualified for Hanover.

Thailand breathes sigh of relief as Asian Games committee nods approval

BANGKOK (AFP) — Thai sports and political chiefs breathed a huge sigh of relief Friday after passing a crucial test of their readiness to host next year's troubled Asian Games, sources said.

Senior officials from the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA), here to assess whether Bangkok will be ready for the massive event in December 1998, gave organisers a desperately-needed nod of approval.

"We are satisfied with the progress of the construction," OCA technical chairman Wei Ji Jong said after inspecting infrastructure at four sites earmarked for the games.

"We are here to help BAGOC (Bangkok Asian Games Organising Committee). We are not afraid of any kind of problems or (that) we will encounter difficulties," he was quoted as saying in The Nation newspaper.

The approval means Bangkok will retain the prestigious event after months of anxious negotiations during which the OCA gave Thai organisers a last warning to end internal hickering and political interference or be stripped of the games.

The OCA had expressed concern that infrastructure and stadiums were behind schedule in spite of the fact that Thailand was given seven years to get ready for the Asian.

"My previous visits made me won-

der whether the complex would be completed on time," Wei told the Bangkok Post after visiting one of the four key sites north of Bangkok.

"But now I am convinced, following the financial assurances which have been made, that they will have the complex ready by August," he added.

Contractors on some crucial projects ran into trouble when they saw their cash reserves dry up as Thailand's economic slump hit the property and construction sectors hard.

Bangkok Land Plc, suffered a major liquidity crunch, sparking fears that some stadiums would not be completed in time.

But Wei said he was relieved to find that "there had been much more progress" in construction and Bangkok Land had assured the OCA that it had "enough funds and will finish construction" on time, The Nation reported.

Wei also said the OCA was happy to see BAGOC and the Olympic Committee of Thailand (OCT) cooperating after months of politically-motivated feuding.

"We feel more confident when we see the OCT work closely with BAGOC. We trust OCT, which supervised the work on our behalf," Wei said.

In September the OCA struck an

agreement with the OCT to ensure that Bangkok would be ready to host the event.

"With the solution we have reached here in this meeting, Bangkok will host the games in 1998," OCA president Sheikh Ahmad Fahd Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah of Kuwait said after a meeting of the OCA executive board.

The OCA signed a memorandum of agreement with BAGOC, reasserting OCA authority for supervising BAGOC's organisation of the games, Sheikh Ahmad said.

"We are not worried about the sports facilities. We are worried about the other items," Sheikh Ahmad added, referring to delays for items such as tickets, promotion, accommodation, transportation and security.

Meanwhile other reports said a company named JSL had won the right to organise the opening and closing ceremonies of the games in December 1998 after beating other contenders for the contract.

The games ceremonies and performance committee said JSL had agreed to cut the cost of the ceremonies to 188.6 million baht (\$4.7 million) from 198 million baht as economic woes continue to batter Thailand.

River Plate beats Vasco 2-0 to qualify for Supercopa semis

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil (AP) — Argentina's River Plate beat Brazil's Vasco 2-0 to qualify for the semifinals of the Supercopa Soccer Tournament in a tumultuous game cut short after a line judge was hit by a firework.

River Plate edged ahead early Thursday night when Gallardo scored on free kick in the 6th minute.

Then in the 23rd minute, Vasco blew their chances when they lost their star striker Edmundo, who was expelled for elbowing River Plate goalie Burgos in the mouth.

Vasco's situation continued to deteriorate minutes later when Felipe was expelled in the 37th minute.

The fans sensing their team had lost began pelting the field with stones and fights broke out in the stands. The second half didn't go any better.

After a delay caused by rowdy fans pelting River Plate's reserves, it looked like referee Eduardo Gamboa of Chile would call the game before the second half started.

In the 50th minute Salas scored River Plate's second goal, sealing the game for the Argentines.

Then when a firework hit the line judge in the 67th minute, Gamboa called the game.

Italians praised for tough draw in Russian snow

ROME (AP) — This time, a draw was satisfying.

Italy coach Cesare Maldini came under heavy criticism for a series of draws that forced the team into a playoff to reach the World Cup finals, but he and his players were branded heroes Thursday after escaping snowy Moscow with a 1-1 tie against Russia.

That first leg result in Wednesday night's game in nearly unplayable conditions is favorable for an Italy that now hosts the playoff's second leg Nov. 15 at Naples.

"The Azzurri didn't just use their legs, ankles and elbows, but also, let it be said, a nice bit of heart," said Gazzetta Dello Sport newspaper. "Let's raise our heads. Now, dear Cesare, we need a team capable of winning in Naples."

Following weeks of firing salvos at Maldini and his charges for lacking strategy and, sometimes, determination, Italians were more optimistic that their beloved team will not fail to reach the World Cup finals for the first time in 40 years.

"And now to Naples for the party" and "Italian heart in the storm" were headlines in the Corriere Dello Sport daily.

"An Italy of lions%" boasted the Gazzetta Dello Sport, a reference to the nickname of England's national team. The English held Italy to a 0-0 draw Oct. 11 in the Azzurri's prior outing — a result that sent England to France '98 and forced Italy to win the playoff with Russia in order to reach soccer's grandest stage.

"It went well for all of us. At Naples, I want to see that same determination, that desire to go to France, to win and to suffer," said Paolo Maldini, Cesare's son and Italy's captain.

He played a stellar match Wednesday, shutting down dangerous Russian winger Andrei Kanchelskis and creating runs up the flank from his left-back position. All that despite playing for the first time since hurting his ankle in the England game.

With heavy snowfall throughout the match making

World Cup qualifying results

European Zone Play-offs, 1st leg
 * At Moscow
 Russia 1 (Cannavaro 52g) Italy 1 (Vieri 49) 1
 * At Zagreb
 Croatia (Bilic 11, Vlaovic 49) Ukraine 0
 * At Dublin
 Republic of Ireland 1 (Irwin 8) Belgium 1 (Nilis 30)
 * At Budapest
 Hungary 1 (Illes 89) Yugoslavia 7 (Brnovic 2, Djukic 6, Savicevic 10, Mijatovic 26, 41, 51, Milosevic 65)

footing and visibility nearly nil — and prompting officials to use a bright orange ball instead of the standard white one — Italy couldn't rely on its technical superiority. Slipping and sliding through the mud, neither team was capable of conducting the action.

Not surprisingly, both goals were the result of defensive miscues.

Atletico Madrid's Christian Vieri, who joined Olympique Marseille's Fabrizio Ravanelli to form a sturdy strike duo, put the visitors ahead in the 50th minute, slotting in a left-footed drive after defender Ahrik Tseiba fell.

But Russia leveled two minutes later, when sliding defender Fabio Cannavaro couldn't avoid knocking into his net a low cross by Russian substitute Dmitry Khokhlov.

The game was noteworthy for several reasons:

— Vieri's opener, at the start of the second half, was the first goal ever by an Italian at Moscow. The Azzurri had been shut out in four prior trips to the city.

— Cannavaro's slip-up was the first goal that Italy has allowed in an official match since Maldini assumed the coaching reins, snapping a string of 760 scoreless minutes.

— At 19, Gianluigi Buffon, who made a stunning sprawling save shortly after coming off the bench in the first half, is the second youngest "keeper" to play for Italy. The third-stringer made his debut because of injuries to starter Gianluca Pagliuca (bruised knee cap in a collision with Kanchelskis) and regular Angelo Peruzzi, who didn't make the trip to Russia.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANNAN HIRSCH

WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q. 1 - East-West vulnerable, as South you hold:
 ♠ 7 8 4 2 ♣ K 8 5 ♦ 7 5 ♠ 9 7 6
 The bidding has proceeded:
 NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST
 1♠ Pass 2♣ Pass
 What action do you take?
 A. 3♠ B. 3♥ C. 3♦ D. 3NT

Q. 2 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
 ♠ K 5 ♣ 6 ♦ A Q 8 5 ♠ K J 8 4
 What is your opening bid?
 A. 1♠ B. 1♥ C. 1♦ D. 1NT

Q. 3 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
 ♠ 8 7 5 ♣ 10 4 3 ♦ 9 8 ♠ A 8 2
 Partner opens the bidding with one no trump. What action do you take?
 A. 2NT B. 3NT C. 4NT D. 5NT

Q. 4 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
 ♠ 9 8 7 6 5 ♣ K Q J 9 8 4 ♦ 4 3 2
 The bidding has proceeded:
 NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST
 1♠ Pass 2♣ Pass
 What action do you take?
 A. 3♣ B. 3♦ C. 3♥ D. 3NT

TODAY AT	CINEMA TEL: 634144	CINEMA TEL: 634144	CINEMA TEL: 699238	CINEMA TEL: 671420	CINEMA TEL: 079 33430	CINEMA TEL: 079 33430	Hisham Yanes Theatre TEL: 625155
	PHILADELPHIA "1"	PHILADELPHIA "2"	PLAZA	CONCORD	GALLERIA 1	GALLERIA 2	Watch out for the new play THE GOVERNMENT IN THE SERVICE OF PEOPLE Starring Hisham Yanes and Amal Dabbas
	Westley Snipes & Patrick Swayze ... in TO WONG FOO Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	007 GOLDEN EYE Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Van Damme... in DOUBLE TEAM Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	CONCORD "1" Tommy Lee Jones & Susan Sarandon ... in CLIENT (12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30) CONCORD "2" Alec Baldwin & Kim Basinger ... in TOO HOT TO HANDLE Shows: 3:30, 5:45 only	ABDOUN Nicholas Cage ... in CON AIR Shows: 3:30, 6:00, 8:30, 10:45	ABDOUN SCREAM Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	

relief as approval

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or tough n snow

qualifying results but key Italy 1-0

Italy 1-0

Italy 1-0

Italy 1-0

Italy 1-0

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Sports

Hill, Payton head U.S. World Championship Team

NEW YORK (AFP) — Detroit Pistons forward Grant Hill and Seattle SuperSonics point guard Gary Payton headline the 10 players named Thursday to the U.S. team for the 1998 World Basketball Championships in Greece.

Other National Basketball Association players selected include Vin Baker of Seattle, Milwaukee's Terrell Brandon, Kevin Garnett and Tom Gugliotta of Minnesota, Allan Houston of New York, Christian Laettner of Atlanta, Glen Rice of Charlotte and Washington's Chris Webber.

Hill and Payton both played on the gold medal winning team at the 1996 Olympic Games. Atlanta Olympic team member Shaquille O'Neal is absent from the side after apparently turning down an invitation from the selectors.

The squad features nine 1997 NBA All-Stars and four players that earned All-NBA honors last season. Nine players boast previous USA Basketball experience. The final two members of the team will be chosen next spring. The championships in Athens run from July 29-Aug 9.

Hill, 25, is one of the most experienced in international play after competing in Atlanta, as well as in world junior championships, the Pan Am Games and on the developmental team that sparred with the first Olympic Dream Team before the 1992 Barcelona Games.

"I'm really honored to have been chosen to represent my country and play in the World Championships in Greece."

Hill said, "I was glued to the television in 1994 when the team played in Toronto."

Garnett, 21, is the youngest member of the squad. On October 1 he signed a six-year contract with the Timberwolves worth a reported \$120 million.

"Dream Team II" won the world title in Toronto three years ago, but the taunting and trash talking of the NBA's rising young stars was not well received and helped push for a lineup of more established players at the Atlanta Olympics.

NBA senior vice president Rod Thorn, chairman of the selection committee, said he did not expect any similar outbursts to tarnish the U.S. performance in Athens.

"I think when our committee met to discuss the team we were not only looking for outstanding basketball players we were looking for outstanding young men," Thorn said. "I think if you look at the 10 young men we've selected, I don't think we'll have those problems."

Rudy Tomjanovich, who led the Houston Rockets to the NBA title in 1994 and 1995, will coach the team.

"I'm very excited about the group of players the committee selected," Tomjanovich said. "It's not only a very talented group, but a versatile one. Almost every player on this team can play more than one position. It gives the coach an option to play many different combinations."

Japan meets Korea in final chance for France

SEOUL (AFP) — Japan desperately needed a victory against arch-rival South Korea this weekend to keep alive its hopes of going to the World Cup next year, Japanese head coach Takeshi Okada said here Friday.

"I believe this is our last chance. We will definitely win to grab the opportunity to go to the France World Cup," Okada told reporters.

"We cannot lose, especially when we think about the 10,000 fans who have flown in from Japan to cheer for our victory," he said.

Japan, playing South Korea in a do-or-die match Saturday, face the humiliation of being the only country to host a World Cup final without ever having attended one.

Japan and South Korea will co-host the 2002 World Cup.

South Korean head coach Cha Bum-Kun told reporters Friday that even with his team already guaranteed a ticket to the finals next year there would be no mercy for the Japanese.

"There has been no thought given as to whether we should show mercy," he said.

The results of Saturday's game and the UAE's home match against Uzbekistan on Sunday will help determine who will be in the second place in the Group B. Japan, with seven points, is one point behind UAE.

"We will win. If we draw, and UAE loses to South Korea, we will have to look at the goals difference. But I have not thought about a draw," said Japanese coach Okada.

The first encounter between South Korea and Japan was in 1954, and since then South Korea have won 33 matches while losing nine and drawing 14. Of the 14 home fixtures, South Korea has only lost once in 1984.

Qatar come from behind to sink China's World Cup hopes

Kuwait, Iran draw 0-0 in Group A

DALIAN, China (AFP) — Qatar came from behind to beat China 3-2 in their World Cup Asian zone Group A play-off match here on Friday.

The defeat virtually eliminates China's hopes of qualifying for the World Cup final.

Striker Gao Feng put the home side ahead in the 22nd minute but Qatar equalized just before half-time through 19-year-old Dahi Saad Al-Naemi.

Mohamad Salem Al-Enazi put the visitors 2-1 up in the 55th minute and Zamel Essa Al-Kuwart made it 3-1 five minutes later, capitalizing on a mis-

Asian zone Group A standings

	P	W	D	L	Gf	Ga	Pts
1. Iran	7	3	3	1	13	6	12
2. S. Arabia	6	3	1	2	6	5	10
3. Kuwait	7	2	2	3	7	7	8
4. China	6	2	1	3	9	13	7
5. Qatar	6	2	1	3	5	9	7

take by Chinese Ma Mingyu.

China pulled one back in the 82nd minute through defender Fan Zhiyi, who blasted home from inside the area after a pass from Xie Feng but Qatar held on to win.

"We failed to take advantage when we led 1-0. The players were not quick and responsive enough," said Chinese head coach Qi Wusheng.

"In the second half we lost our composure," Qi added.

Qatar's victory kept their slim hopes of qualifying alive.

"I told my players during the break that we would definitely win the match. I said as long as we press the Chinese hard enough, we would snatch victory," said Qatar coach Jamal Hajae.

In Group A, Iran leads with 12 points, followed by Saudi Arabia with 10.

Kuwait have eight points after their 0-0 draw with Iran.

China and Qatar have seven points each with two wins, one draw and three losses.

The group winner qualifies while the runner-up will face the Group B runner-up in a play-off.

Maradona says he is retiring again

BUENOS AIRES (AFP) — Saying he is weary of talk about his doping affairs, football great Diego Maradona on Thursday once again announced his retirement.

It is the eighth time that the disgraced former World Cup winner, who marked his 37th birthday on Thursday, has made such an announcement.

Speaking by telephone on the television programme "Fenomeno Real," Maradona said that his family "was the most important thing" in his life and that his decision was irreversible.

Maradona said he was concerned about the health of his father and the future of his two daughters, Dalma and Yanina, in the wake of reports of his testing positive for drugs.



Rangers deny chasing Dalglish for manager's job

GLASGOW (AFP) — Rangers dismissed suggestions Friday that they were targeting Newcastle manager Kenny Dalglish to take over from outgoing manager Walter Smith.

Club vice-chairman Donald Findlay insisted Rangers did not need to fill the vacancy until the end of the year, and the Glasgow club will take their time to draw up a list of candidates before inviting anyone to take the job.

"I think it is always as well to wait until people are asked and I do not think anybody has as yet been asked to become manager of Rangers, so I do not see how anybody can refuse the job," said Findlay, shooting down reports that his club have offered, or are on the point of offering, Newcastle a 4 million pound pay-off for Dalglish.

"There are a number of names and people, and the list will remain confidential. The Press in England and up here can speculate to their hearts' content and they can do what they usually do and get it 99 per cent wrong," said Findlay.

Findlay stressed that no decisions have yet been made by the Rangers board on Smith's successor.

"The door is open to all. We are going to sit down

over the next few weeks and are going to look at people who we think are of the right status and calibre and who want to come to Ibrox to take over from Walter Smith," said Findlay, who added that the nationality of the new manager will not be important, but a proven track record in European competition will.

"The job has not been started yet and it will be completed by the end of the year when we would hope to be able to go and talk to not just one person but a number," he said.

Asked directly whether Dalglish is still one of the Rangers possibilities, Findlay ruled the Newcastle boss out on the basis of radio reports that he has no interest in switching north of the border.

"Clearly Kenny does not want to come here, so no," he said.

Dalglish reacted furiously to the speculation and said: "It has been suggested that being linked to a big club like Rangers is a compliment.

"But I think it's an insult to the fans of Newcastle. Their intelligence has been insulted because it is total fabrication.

"There is no foundation in it in any way, shape or form. I don't want people to think that because I

watched Rangers as a kid. I'm going to go back to work there."

Leeds boss George Graham has also dismissed speculation linking him with Rangers.

He said: "When a big job comes up there is always going to be speculation.

"With Kenny Dalglish and myself being Scottish and both having experience in Europe I suppose it was to be expected that our names would be linked with the Rangers job, but it is only speculation."

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Sudanese civil war parties negotiate 'sensitive issues'

NAIROBI (AFP) — Representatives of Sudan's government and the rebel movement in the south were discussing "sensitive issues" Friday in peace talks at a secret venue in the Kenyan capital, rebel sources told Agence France Presse.

The talks were taking place amid conflicting claims about the military situation in the 14-year-old civil war, which is estimated to have cost a million lives in Africa's largest country.

The conference, between government officials and representatives of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), opened Wednesday with Kenyan Foreign Minister Kalonzi Musyoka defining "the major bone of contention" as the separation of state and religion and self-determination for southern Sudan.

The Sudanese government delegation is headed by Foreign Minister Ali Osman Mohammad Taha, and the SPLA by its second-in-command, Salva Kiir.

The southerners, who are mostly Christian or animist, are seeking an end to Islamic law and their domination by the Arabised

Muslim north of the country.

As the two sides met, a coalition of rebel splinter groups who have joined the government side claimed in Khartoum that they were "moving forward to take more territory."

Peter Paul Kong, deputy chief of staff of the coalition, the South Sudan Defence Force, also said in a statement that the southern capital, Juba, was "fully secure."

He said SPLA troops were "cornered" near Kongor, some 300 kilometres to the north.

This conflict with reports from relief workers, who told AFP that the SPLA had surrounded Juba, with the front line between about 30 and 70 kilometres from the city.

Food is getting to Juba only by barge up the White Nile, and by air, and an unknown number of residents have fled towards Yei, 150 kilometres to the south-west, which is held by the SPLA.

These people are about half-way along that road, the relief workers say, along with returnees from Uganda and people who have left displaced persons' camps.

Some of the people were said to be in "quite bad shape."

Mr. Kong, who said his force had captured a number of locations in the southern state of Upper Nile, warned that SPLA commanders and men would defect if the rebels failed to show sincerity at the Nairobi talks and continued their "procrastination."

The Netherlands embassy in Nairobi, representing Luxembourg which is current president of the European Union, meanwhile urged the two sides "to arrive swiftly at an outcome that will halt the loss of human life in Sudan, allow international aid to get safely through to the civilian population and re-establish a full and lasting peace in Sudan."

The statement added that the EU hoped the negotiations, which initially concern only southern Sudan, "will subsequently be extended to all those who play a role in the conflict in Sudan."

It said EU aid to the country would be linked to "a lasting peace agreement which settles all the outstanding issues."

The civil war has embittered regional relations, with the regime of President Omar Al Bashir accusing Uganda, Eritrea and Ethiopia of aiding the rebels. Uganda, in turn, accuses the Khartoum regime of backing Ugandan rebels.

The two sides are meeting for the first time since 1994, when a previous round of negotiations broke down.

The decision to resume talks was reached in Nairobi last month after the Khartoum regime agreed to regard peace principles reached with the SPLA in 1994 as "negotiating principles," before later backing out this agreement.

These principles include the establishment of a secular state and the abolition of Islamic law.

The conference is taking place under the aegis of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development, which groups Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Sudan and Uganda.

A sub-committee on Sudan, made up of Kenya, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Uganda, is represented at ministerial or sub-ministerial level.

Primakov displays desire to stand up for Arabs in peace

CAIRO (AFP) — Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov wrapped up a Middle East visit on Friday during which he openly displayed Russia's desire to stand up for the Arab states and reassert itself as a major player in the region.

At the end of a week-long tour which took him to Lebanon, Syria, Israel, the West Bank and Jordan in addition to Egypt, the Russian diplomat Friday proposed a 12-point code of conduct for Middle East security.

The previous evening, to mark Russia's desire for a return in force to the region, he announced the appointment of a permanent special envoy for the Middle East peace process: Deputy Foreign Minister Viktor Posuvayuk, a diplomat who speaks Arabic perfectly and is an expert on the area.

Eleven of the 12 points in the code of conduct proposed by Foreign Minister Primakov are more or less designed to appeal to the Arab states.

With the exception of an appeal for "decisive counteraction to all forms and manifestations of terrorism and extremism, regardless of their motivations, including religious ones," the bases of the security proposed by the Russian minister reflect a vision almost identical to that of the Arab states.

The Russian proposal effectively criticises the Israel concept of security.

It says "there is no way to safeguard national security... solely by military and technical means" and "stable security... cannot be secured without peaceful settlement on all negotiating tracks in the peace process."

Moreover, the Russian proposal calls for "implementation of bilateral and international treaties and agreements," for the "creation of a zone free from the weapons of mass destruction" and for the reintegration of Iraq into the region, all demands made time and again by Arab leaders.

Minister Primakov even

touched on Arab concerns about Israeli-Turkish military cooperation.

The code of conduct which he proposes rejects "confronting strategic alliances" and "groupings relying on outside forces and structures." Turkey is the only state in the region which is a member of NATO.

Making his own assessment of his tour at a press conference here Friday, the Russian foreign minister did not mince his words in criticising Israel and firmly backed Syria.

The present deadlock results from the fact that the current Israeli government is deviating from the agreements and understandings that have been concluded," he said.

By "understandings," he was referring to the verbal undertaking of Israel's previous Labour government to withdraw fully from the Golan Heights.

"The Middle East peace process will progress only on the condition that the

movement is on all the tracks," he said.

"We understand the value of movement on the Palestinian track. Nevertheless efforts should be deployed in parallel on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks," he said, stressing that Russia "objects to the separation of the Syrian and Lebanese tracks."

"It is imperative to do everything to lower the tension in Lebanon. Some people are talking about large-scale military action in Lebanon. We are completely against this."

Since the 1950s, the Arabs have seen Russia as an ally, even if its influence has clearly diminished since the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991.

"Russia is determined to pursue an active course in the Middle East," Mr. Primakov said. He added that "the monopolisation of the peace process in one [American] hand" had not brought the results which had been hoped for.

Prince Hassan calls for pooling efforts to achieve development

(Continued from page 1)

as a centre base and not a passage route. Jordan is not a part of Israel's sphere but the lung through which the Palestinians deepen their national identity.

The Crown Prince said that in evaluating the stages that Jordan has crossed, the country should optimise the positive elements and avoid the negative ones.

"We always continue to need appropriate planning and revision to face changing challenges," he said. "As such, we should continue to update legislation to keep up-to-date with new situations and to consolidate the institutional framework in order to ensure the continuity of implementing policies with full accountability and transparency to all people."

Prince Hassan told his audience of high-ranking government officials and private sector leaders: "I did not come here to talk about planning but about a strategy and setting Jordanian priorities amidst various changes, including the competitive climate, while maintaining at the same time our capabilities to meet the aspirations of the Jordanian people."

"I did not come to speak about planning from an ivory tower, away from people's aspirations but I have come to

urge the people to participate through various civil and social institutions and through meetings in all parts of the country," the Prince said stressing that the national economy must face challenges to achieve dynamic progress.

The Crown Prince clarified the concept of the plan pointing out that Jordan's aim is not central planning, because such a path contradicts creativity. "We speak about a strategy, a vision and a creative framework," he said.

In another address, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali said the selection of the team that will work on the plan and prepare the new strategy, was a very careful decision that took into consideration experience, knowledge, vision and true commitment to the welfare and prosperity of the country through hard work and national affiliation.

Taken into consideration also was the deep knowledge of the concerned people over the problems in certain sectors and the means to resolve such problems, the prime minister said, noting that the team would be made up of men and women from the public and private sectors and from various regions in the Kingdom.

Planning Minister Rima Khalaf highlighted many aspects of development

Jordan has achieved over the past few years. She mentioned improvements in infrastructure projects such as roads, water and electricity.

Improvements were also reviewed in the areas of health and education as well as the economy and finance where local revenues now cover all recurrent spending compared to previous years when half of the Treasury's revenue used to come from foreign grants and assistance.

The minister pointed out that Jordan has improved its international ranking in terms of the quality of life of its citizens and development expressed in different forms of level of prosperity.

She also highlighted higher exports, wider production base and more self-reliance.

Explaining the main features of the 1998-2003 plan, Dr. Khalaf said the new plan is an enhancement of the trend started in the previous plan by moving from a concept of a "budget for capital expenditure" to a "national development strategy" that would include a coordinated list of policies that should be considered as a base for various legislations and a reference for decision-making.

The minister paid special attention to the following five aspects that the plan should take into consideration:

1) The core change in the

volume and resources of funds to be used for development noting that international and foreign aid and soft loans for development are shrinking.

2) The change in the economic role of the state.

3) Higher rate of productivity by maximising return on investments.

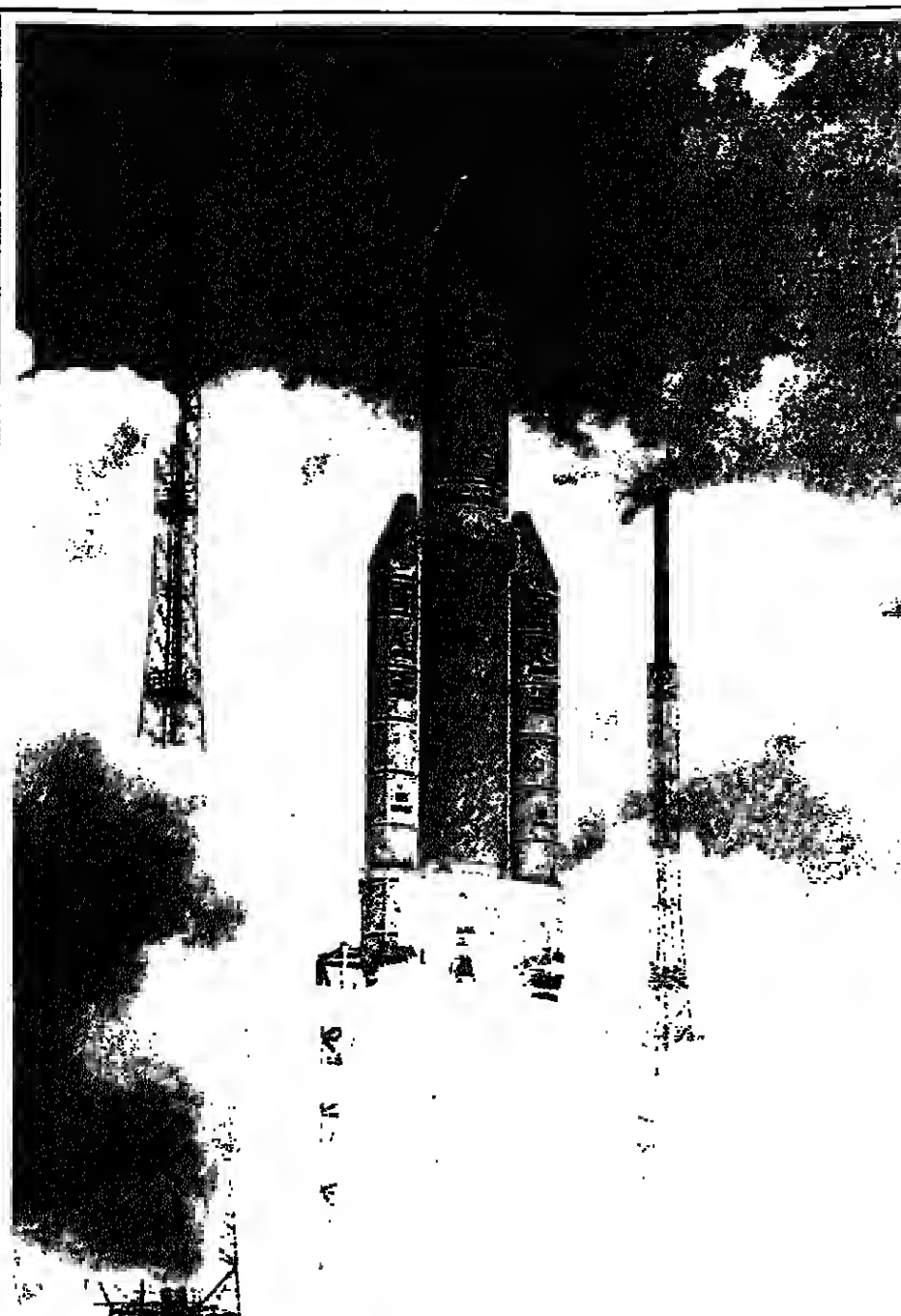
4) Restructuring the economy and the production base into a competitive role rather than being protected.

5) Giving special attention to the social dimension by distributing economic benefits among all groups of society and all regions.

The minister said the government has divided the task for the formulation of the plan among four teams, the first of which will be responsible for sectors directly involved in production such as industry, agriculture and tourism.

The second team will focus on the social side of health, education and higher education as well as mother and child issues.

The third team will look at basic infrastructure and policies related to this area while the fourth team will be responsible for supportive services such as technological, scientific and administrative development.



ANOTHER ROCKET OFF: The Ariane-5 rocket, a new generation of the European space rocket, blasting off from its launching pad in Kourou, French Guiana Thursday. The Ariane-5, an upgrade of the Ariane-4 rocket which had a much smaller payload, is capable of delivering an 18-tonne satellite into a low earth orbit and a 5.9-tonne payload into geostationary orbit (Reuters photo)

New land grab makes West Bank settlement larger than Tel Aviv

ABU DIS (AFP) — Israel is planning the expansion of a West Bank settlement to cover an area greater than that of Tel Aviv, stretching from Jerusalem nearly to the Jordan border, Israeli experts said Friday.

Israel has ordered the confiscation of 1,200 hectares of land to expand the West Bank settlement of Maaleh Adumim, said Shmuel Grogan, an Israeli architect involved in a legal appeal against the land grab.

The new confiscation added to the 4,800 hectares already within the municipal borders of Maaleh Adumim will make the entire expanse of the settlement larger than of Tel Aviv, which is 5,100 hectares, he said.

Talking to journalists and diplomats in the Palestinian village of Abu Dis at a camp of the Jabalin bedouin tribe, who were forced out of their homes early this year to allow expansion of Maaleh Adumim, Mr. Grogan showed official maps of the new settlement boundaries drawn by the Israeli civil administration.

The new expansion brings the settlement's boundaries to join Jerusalem's municipal line, then extends east to about 15 kilometres from the Jordanian border.

A number of Arab villages

are squeezed between the expanded Maaleh Adumim and Jerusalem, including Abu Dis. The plan would also cut off the current Palestinian road between Bethlehem and Ramallah, effectively separating the northern West Bank from the south.

"The settlement is shaped like a fist, punching the Arab villages. The plan leaves no room for their expansion," Mr. Grogan said.

Maaleh Adumim is already the most populated settlement with some 17,000 residents, but its current constructed area is only a small kernel inside the vast expanse set aside for it, most of it now barren hills.

In comparison, Abu Dis, with a similar population, has an area of only 130 hectares under boundaries drawn up by Israeli occupation authorities which would have no room for expansion.

"The official boundaries of a settlement are usually much larger than the actual existing part of the settlement. This way Israel can build in those boundaries and say it's only 'natural and contiguous' growth," Mr. Grogan said.

The peace process has been deadlocked for the past eight months over the issue of Jewish settlements. Palestinians have demanded a complete stop to settlement

construction as a condition for resuming full negotiations.

Long-term Israeli planning for settlement expansion such as Maaleh Adumim has not been on the agenda in debates over a settlement halt.

"The Palestinians tend to wait until the bulldozers have already started working before making a case against a settlement. But by then it's too late. Once the plans are approved and the decision is made to go through with it, it's difficult to stop," Mr. Grogan said.

The plans for Maaleh Adumim's expansion were approved by former Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1992, but he delayed implementation. The plan was reactivated under current Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Mr. Grogan said.

Palestinians who stand to lose land in the new confiscation filed an appeal against the plans with the Israeli army's civil administration of the West Bank. If the appeal is turned down, as expected, they intend to take the case to the supreme court.

A group of seven prominent Israeli architects have joined the appeal, saying the settlements should be overturned due to technical errors and poor planning, Mr. Grogan said.

U.S. pressing Israel to hand over 10 per cent of W. Bank

(Continued from page 1)

message is this: No redeployment will take place until the Palestinians have first destroyed the terrorist infrastructure," Mr. Sharanovsky told Israel Radio Thursday. "The depth of our redeployment will be proportional to the depth of our trust."

Israel's cabinet had decided after two suicide bombings by Islamists in Jerusalem this summer that it would not hand any more West Bank land to Palestinian control until the PNA has cracked down on the Hamas and Islamic Jihad groups.

Under a U.S.-backed accord reached with the Palestinians in January, Mr. Netanyahu had committed himself to a three-stage troop

pullback in the West Bank, to be concluded by mid-1998.

Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy, who will head the Israeli delegation to Washington, said Friday he was upset with talk that Israel was not prepared to give back any land at this stage, saying it made his negotiating position very difficult.

Mr. Levy suggested, though, that Israel would try to link any withdrawal to the PNA's fight against terrorism. "There is an agreement... Israel keeps its part. We will discuss in which way the other side keeps its part," he told Israel Radio.

The Yediot Ahronot and Haaretz dailies said Friday that U.S. officials would not support Israel's attempt to get out of a troop pullback.

The Haaretz daily said the U.S. wants Israel to commit to a reasonable starting date for the pullback, with spring floated as an acceptable time.

Under the U.S.-brokered accord, the first phase was to have been in March 1997, followed by a second pullback this fall.

However, the first stage was never carried out because the Palestinians angrily rejected Israel's offer of two per cent of the land.

Yediot said the U.S. expected Israel to agree to a troop pullback from 10 per cent of the West Bank in the second stage. The daily said that should Israel be compelled to go ahead with a withdrawal, it would offer only one per cent.



White House Halloween stories

WASHINGTON (R) — Do ghosts haunt the White House? Some people think so, especially at Halloween. "There are, from time to time, reports that the White House is haunted," White House spokesman Mike McCurry told reporters on Thursday, a day before the annual holiday. He said the hauntings are said to include "mysterious appearances of figures from history," and that there are "tales and legends of a former White House usher, now dead, who appears from time to time." Stories about White House ghosts are legendary. Many of them revolve around President Abraham Lincoln, the melancholy man who lost a son while living there and was assassinated. Legend has it that British leader Winston Churchill would not sleep in the Lincoln bedroom because it was haunted. Lincoln used the room as his office. It is now a popular guest room.

Sinatra denies having affair with Jacqueline

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — A former valet of Frank Sinatra denied telling a biographer that the singer had a brief affair with Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis as Randy Taraborrelli claims in "Sinatra, the Voice Behind the Legend." "The book has so many quotes from me that are just not true," 72-year-old Bill Staply told USA Today daily. "The only thing I remember was Frank having a big fight with his wife, Barbara, and telling her he could have married anyone, including princess Margaret." The writer claims to have Staply's comments on tape.

New diet pill going to the dogs

LOS ANGELES (R) — Just when it seemed people were growing wise to the promises of quick fix weight loss fads comes yet a new diet pill — for pets. Petkin pet care systems of Marina Del Rey, California has introduced a tablet for cats and dogs it says will help them lose about three per cent of their body fat in just two weeks. The petrin pill consists of two natural food supplements that boost metabolism and inhibit the conversion of carbohydrates into fat. It is based on the same ingredients already used in a popular herbal diet remedy for people. But unlike people, who may just prefer taking a pill to the hard work of diet and exercise, their pets don't always have a choice.

Diana becomes a 'myth'

BERLIN (AFP) — Berlin's prestigious Free University is offering a course on the "myth" of Princess Diana, two months after her tragic car accident in Paris. The course, which began Thursday, consists of 12 conferences with the theme, "Myth and Politics — Diana, from the Princess of Wales to the Queen of Hearts." Several professors will dissect her legend as a modern icon or as the angel of death of the monarchy.

British runaway boy survives 80-kilometre ride on truck axle

LONDON (AFP) — A nine-year-old British boy running away from home was found safe and well after clinging to the underside of a truck for 80 kilometres, a press report said Friday. Aaron Bowers, who has reportedly run away from home 30 times, travelled for two hours wedged close to the side of the 17-tonne lorry, according to The Sun.



Jerusalem Times, Saturday, November 1, 1997